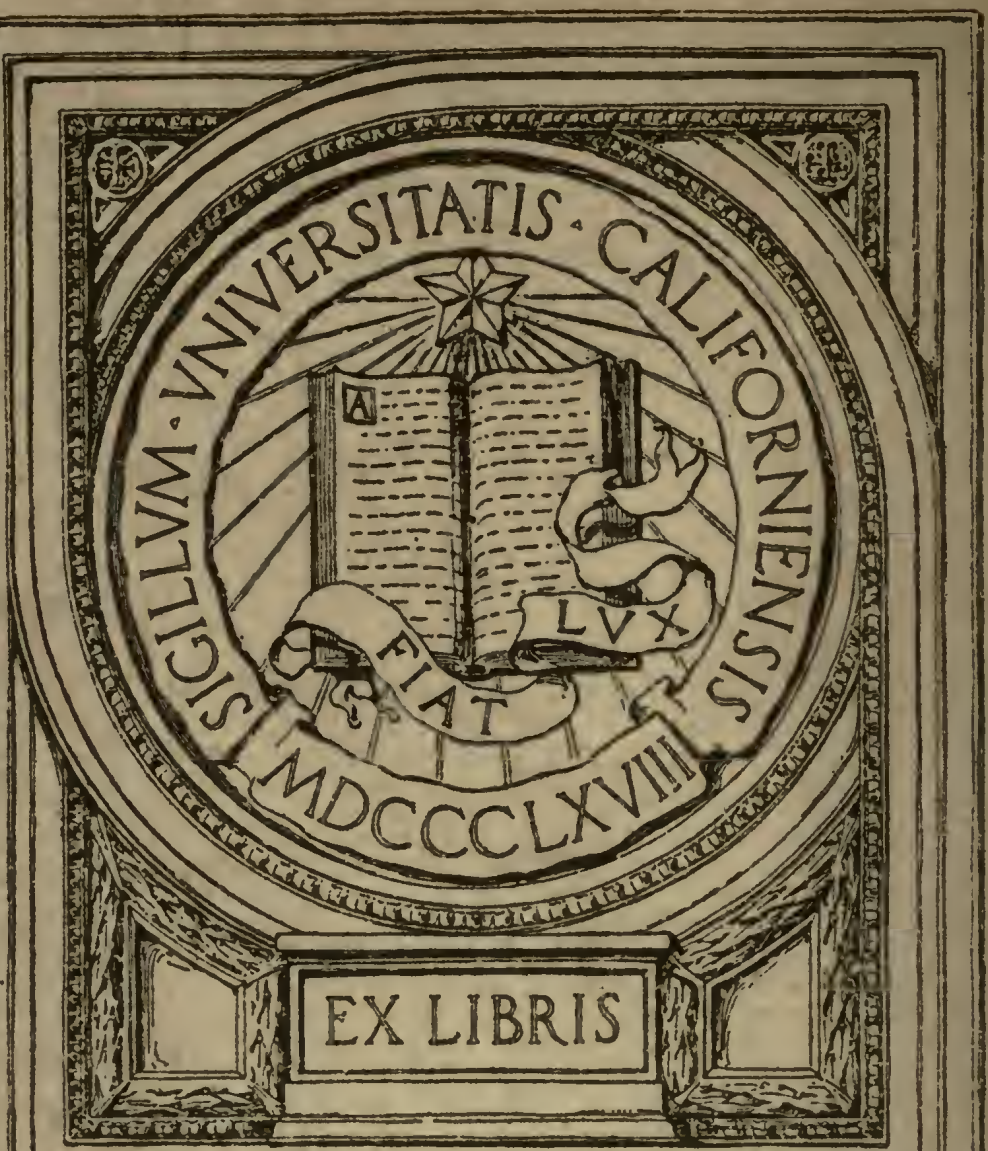
WOMEN POETS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The Canterbury Poets.

EDITED BY WILLIAM SHARP.

WOMEN POETS.

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WOMEN POETS OF THE VICTORIAN ERA.

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES, BY MRS. WILLIAM SHARP.

LONDON:
WALTER SCOTT, LIMITED,
PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

TO

MY FRIEND

MONA CAIRD,

THE MOST LOYAL AND

DEVOTED ADVOCATE OF

THE CAUSE OF

WOMAN.

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PREFACE.

IT is a somewhat hackneyed remark, that if some of the poetry of our younger writers had appeared a century ago, the authors would have achieved a fame, or at any rate a reputation, beyond all comparison with the scanty meed of acknowledgment which is their present reward. It is, however, not generally recognised how much of verse of a high intellectual and artistic quality has been written by women during the last two centuries. One or two names have a high place on the roll of fame; others are rewarded with honourable if somewhat patronising mention and approval; and many writers whose productions are of a quality exceptionally noteworthy are totally forgotten, or—as in the case of living authors—strangely, and, one is inclined to say, ungenerously neglected. In the great and ever-increasing pressure of literary production it would be unreasonable to expect that

every true voice should make itself heard, even for the brief while of its singing-days: many, indeed most poets, must be content with the inward joy of their art.

Since much that is fine in itself, so illustrative of the development of character, so representative of an age, must perish, it is surely well that the quintessence of it—the amber left by subsided seas, so to speak—should be preserved; hence one good reason for anthologies. If one's many words are to be as dead and withered leaves, it is a fortunate guerdon from fate if a single lyric, a single sonnet, carry its music or its message to a few hearts here and there among those who come after us. It does not matter if one's name be forgotten, though it is a pleasant thought that it may be mentioned approvingly in days to come. "The Land o' the Leal," "Auld Robin Gray," and other familiar lyrics and poems by women, have survived, not only on account of their pathetic humanity and lyrical sweetness, but also, in some measure at least, because they came into existence at a time when there were far fewer voices than at present, and when the national inheritance of song was not so manifold as it now is.

The scope of this volume covers, as the title indicates, the poetic literature produced by women in the last fifty-four years. It is obviously merely

arbitrary to draw a decisive line at the year 1836, since any date may mark the prime of the career of certain writers, while at the same time it may usher in the finest efforts of others. I have, therefore, endeavoured to make my selection with reference to writers who breathe the spirit of the Victorian, the Modern Era, rather than conformably to the acknowledged limits of any definite period. Thus I have included the interesting poem by Mrs. Carlyle, although it was written in 1832: and, after some hesitation, have decided to omit Joanna Baillie, Mrs. Hemans, and the Baroness Nairne; and for this reason, that though they lived for several years after Queen Victoria's accession to the throne, all their best work was written prior to that event.

The group of women writers, among whom these three whom I have just named were distinguished, which immediately preceded the Victorian Era, is one of great interest. In this chorus of voices the characteristic quality is lyrical sweetness, while there is to be found a strange combination of strength and weakness, due in great part to the socially fettered condition in which women then lived. The house, with its unrelieved monotony of small daily duties, was still held to be the only sphere in which a woman's life should revolve; writing for publication

was looked upon as unwomanly, and with as much aversion as that with which many people at present regard the idea of women appearing on a public platform.

On the threshold of the century died Jean Glover, the daughter of a Scottish weaver; she had married a strolling player, and had become the best actor and singer in his troop. Most of her songs are now forgotten, but the following still remains a great favourite in Scotland:—

OWER THE MUIR AMANG THE HEATHER.

Comin' through the craigs o' Kyle,
Amang the bonnie bloomin' heather,
There I met a bonnie lassie
Keepin' a' her flocks thegither.

Ower the muir amang the heather,
Ower the muir amang the heather,
There I met a bonnie lassie
Keepin' a' her flocks thegither.

Says I, my dear, where is thy hame?
In muir or dale, pray tell me whither?
Says she, I tent the fleecy flocks
That feed amang the bloomin' heather.
Ower the muir, etc.

We laid us down upon a bank,
Sae warm and sunnie was the weather;
She left her flocks at large to rove
Amang the bonnie bloomin' heather.
Ower the muir, etc.

She charmed my heart, and aye sinsyne
I couldna think on ony ither;
By sea and sky! she shall be mine,
The bonnie lass amang the heather.
Ower the muir, etc.

Two other famous Scottish songs were written by women of humble origin. Jean Adams, the author of "There's nae Luck about the House," died unknown in the Greenock Workhouse, and was buried in a pauper's grave; while Isobel Pagan was an Ayrshire "lucky" who kept an alehouse, and sold whisky without a licence. The finest of her songs, "Ca' the Yowes to the Knowes," which, among others, she frequently sang as a means of subsistence, is, for the general reader, too full of Scotticisms to bear quotation here. "The Flowers of the Forest," a ballad on the battle of Flodden, was written by Miss Jane Elliot in fulfilment of a wager with her brother. It rapidly spread through the country as a long-lost ballad recovered, and it was not until some time afterwards that the true authorship was known. Another poem bearing the same title was written earlier by Mrs. Alison Cockburn, at the request of an old gentleman who played to her the air of a forgotten ballad of the same name. Among the countrywomen who may be grouped with Caroline, Baroness Nairne, are Mrs. Anne

Hunter, the wife of the distinguished anatomist of that name, and author of "My Mither bids me bind my Hair"; Lady Anne Barnard, of whose poem, "Auld Robin Gray," Sir Walter Scott said that it was "a real pastoral, worth all the dialogues that Corydon and Phyllis have spoken together, from the days of Theocritus downwards;" Mrs. Anne Grant; Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton, Irish by birth and of Scottish descent, to whom we owe "My ain Fireside"; and Lady John Scott, author of the following beautiful ballad, written on a little lonely church and burial-ground in the Pass of Durisdeer, Dumfriesshire:—

DURISDEER.

We'll meet nae mair at sunset when the weary day is dune,
Nor wander hame thegither by the lee' licht o' the mune.
I'll hear your steps nae langer amang the dewy corn,
For we'll meet nae mair, my bonniest, either at e'en or morn.

The yellow broom is waving abune the sunny brae,
And the rowan berries dancing where the sparkling waters play;
Tho' a' is bright and bonnie it's an eerie place to me,
For we'll meet nae mair, my dearest, either by burn or tree.

Far up into the wild hills there's a kirkyard lone and still,
Where the frosts lie ilka morning and the mists hang low and chill.
And there ye sleep in silence while I wander here my lane,
Till we meet ance mair in Heaven never to part again!

Charlotte Smith (1749-1806) is one of the many writers who has received less recognition in her lifetime than she deserved. Wordsworth, however, paid a fine tribute to her powers when he described her as "a lady, to whom English verse is under greater obligations than are likely to be acknowledged or remembered. She wrote little, and that little unambitiously, but with true feeling for rural nature, at a time when nature was not much regarded by English poets; for in point of time her earlier writings preceded, I believe, those of Cowper and Burns." Wordsworth, who does occasionally seem to have possessed the faculty of enjoying the work of his contemporaries, considered some of the work of Helen Maria Williams worthy of notice, for in a footnote to her "Sonnet on Hope," published in her "Poems on Various Subjects, with introductory remarks on the present state of science and literature in France, 1803," she writes that "Mr. Wordsworth, who lately honoured me with his visits while in Paris, repeated it to me from memory, after a lapse of many years."

Mrs. Mary Tighe, who died in 1810, wrote sonnets which are considered by Mr. Main as deserving to be classed with the very best that have been written by women up to her time. Keats read her works, and being of opinion that they had not been done justice to, he mentioned her in his

early lines "To Some Ladies." Her contemporary, Anna Seward, was a friend of Sir Walter Scott, and was called by her admirers "The Swan of Lichfield."

Side by side with these writers stand Mrs. Anna Letitia Barbauld and Hannah More, both of whom were in great vogue with a large section of the reading public of their day. Mrs. Barbauld wrote several prose works, and her poems were collected after her death, together with a few of her letters and a memoir written by her niece, Lucy Aiken. It is difficult now to understand the reason of Hannah More's former popularity, for her dramas are dull and sententious, and lack the poetical afflatus. One couplet, however, came from her pen which will be remembered when the rest of her work is forgotten—

> "In men this blunder still you find,
> All think their little set mankind."

Mention must not be omitted of Letitia Elizabeth Landon, whose poems in "Albums" and "Annuals" were signed with the well-known initials L. E. L. She was of a delicate, gentle nature, physically and mentally; and her poems reflected not only her own temperament, but the general mild sentiment then in vogue among "the young ladies of the domestic circle." It is usual to couple her with

Mrs. Hemans; but this, I think, without justice. Mrs. Hemans was unquestionably her superior in poetic energy, variety, and rhythmic power. Although this writer's poems are weakened by the sentimentality of her epoch, much of her work has true poetic qualities and lyrical impulse. Her wide popularity has not extended to the present generation, and she now runs the risk of being unduly overlooked. The following poem is one among those which are surely worthy of preservation:—

THE TREASURES OF THE DEEP.

What hidest thou in thy treasure caves and cells,
Thou hollow sounding and mysterious main?—
Pale, glistening pearls, and rainbow-coloured shells,
Bright things which gleam unrecked of, and in vain.
Keep, keep thy riches, melancholy sea!
We ask not such from thee.

Yet more, the depths have more! What wealth untold,
Far down, and shining through their stillness lies!
Thou hast the starry gems, the burning gold,
Won from ten thousand royal argosies.—
Sweep o'er thy spoils, thou wild and wrathful main!
Earth claims not *these* again.

Yet more, the depths have more! Thy waves have rolled
Above the cities of a world gone by!
Sand hath filled up the palaces of old,
Sea-weed o'ergrown the halls of revelry.—
Dash o'er them, Ocean! in thy scornful play:
Man yields them to decay.

Yet more! the billows and the depths have more!
High hearts and brave are gathered to thy breast!
They hear not now the booming waters roar,
The battle thunders will not break their rest.—
Keep thy red gold and gems, thou stormy grave!
Give back the true and brave!

If Mrs. Hemans was the chief lyrical poetess of her time, Joanna Baillie was the foremost dramatic woman writer. She outdistances Hannah More inasmuch as her works, if somewhat ponderous, are yet interesting and full of dramatic feeling, and their occasional harshness is refreshing after the frequent mawkish commonplaces of her predecessor. In "Marmion," Sir Walter Scott paid her the following strong compliment :—

"From the wild harp, which silent hung
By silver Avon's holy shore,
Till twice an hundred years roll'd o'er;
When she, the bold enchantress, came,
With fearless hand and heart on flame!
From the pale willow snatch'd the treasure,
And swept it with a kindred measure,
Till Avon's swans, while rung the grove
With Montfort's hate and Basil's love,
Awakened by the inspired strain,
Deem'd their own Shakespeare lived again."

It is impossible effectively to quote any passage from Joanna Baillie's dramas that would give an adequate idea of her power; but she also wrote songs, many of a humorous character, which

have become popular, and have been set to music. The most widely known is the following, spiritedly set to familiar music in the form of a glee:—

THE CHOUGH AND CROW.

The chough and crow to roost are gone,
The owl sits on the tree,
The hush'd wind wails with feeble moan,
Like infant charity.
The wild fire dances on the fen,
The red star sheds its ray,
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men!
It is our opening day.

Both child and nurse are fast asleep,
And closed is every flower,
The winking tapers faintly peep
High from my lady's bower;
Bewildered hinds with shortened ken
Shrink in their murky way,
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men!
It is our opening day.

No board nor garner own we now,
Nor roof nor latched door,
Nor kind mate bound by holy vow
To bless a poor man's store;
Noon lulls us in a gloomy den,
And night has grown our day;
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men!
It is our opening day.

But it seems to me that by far the finest of this group of writers is the Baroness Nairne, "The Flower

of Strathearn," as she was fitly called in her own district. She may not have the strength of Joanna Baillie, or the versatility of Mrs. Hemans, but her songs are full of deep pathos and kindly humour. They are never local, nor of an interest purely temporary, as was the case with the poems of many of her compeers, but they are instinct with fine feeling that comes straight from the heart and goes straight to the hearts of all readers. What could be more beautiful, more pathetic, or what could have a wider appeal than the well-known song, which has also a beautiful musical setting :—

THE LAND O' THE LEAL.

I'm wearin' awa', John,
Like snaw wreaths in thaw, John,
I'm wearin' awa'
To the land o' the leal.

There's nae sorrow there, John,
There's neither cauld nor care, John,
The day is aye fair
In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn's there, John,
She was baith gude and fair, John,
And oh! we grudged her sair
To the land o' the leal.

But sorrow's sel' wears past, John,
And joy is comin' fast, John,
The joy that's aye to last
In the land o' the leal.

Sae dear that joy was bought, John,
Sae free the battle fought, John,
That sinfu' man e'er brought
To the land o' the leal.

Oh, dry your glist'ning e'e, John,
My soul langs to be free, John,
And angels beckon me
To the land o' the leal.

Oh! haud ye leal and true, John,
Your day it's wearing through, John,
And I'll welcome you
To the land o' the leal.

Now, fare ye well, my ain John,
This world's cares are vain, John,
We'll meet, and we'll be fain
In the land o' the leal.

One poem, a clever Enigma, written in the early part of this century by Catherine Fanshawe, is possibly destined to immortality, not on account of its own merits, but through the strange hazard of Fate. This poem is the celebrated "Letter H," which was supposed by many to owe its origin to Lord Byron. Miss Mitford tells us in her reminiscences: "I have it myself printed in two editions of Lord Byron's works, the one English, the other American." And a friend for whose benefit Joanna Baillie edited a volume of miscellaneous poetry, says of it: "The 'Letter H' (I mean the Enigma so called, ascribed to Lord Byron) she wrote at

Deepdene. I well remember her bringing it down to breakfast, and reading it to us; and my impression is that she had then just composed it."

THE LETTER H.

'Twas in heaven pronounced, and 'twas muttered in hell,
And echo caught faintly the sound as it fell;
On the confines of earth 'twas permitted to rest,
And the depths of the ocean its presence confess'd;
'Twill be found in the sphere when 'tis riven asunder,
Be seen in the lightning and heard in the thunder.
'Twas allotted to man with his earliest breath,
Attends him at birth, and awaits him at death.
Presides o'er his happiness, honour, and health,
Is the prop of his house, and the end of his wealth.
In the heaps of the miser 'tis hoarded with care,
But is sure to be lost on his prodigal heir.
It begins every hope, every wish it must bound,
With the husbandman toils, and with monarchs is crown'd.
Without it the soldier, the seaman may roam,
But woe to the wretch who expels it from home!
In the whispers of conscience its voice will be found,
Nor e'en in the whirlwind of passion be drown'd.
'Twill not soften the heart; but though deaf be the ear,
It will make it acutely and instantly hear.
Yet in shade let it rest, like a delicate flower,
Ah! breathe on it softly—it dies in an hour.

There has not, so far as I am aware, been any anthology formed with the definite aim to represent our modern women-poets by one or more essentially characteristic poems. Too often, on the other hand, women have been represented by their most indifferent productions: generally, the

various selections have been given haphazard, after a predetermined arrangement in chronological or alphabetical sequence. In this volume it has been my endeavour not only to represent each woman with whose writings I have come in contact, but to do so characteristically. I do not, therefore, claim that in every instance a poet is represented by her supreme achievement. Copyright and other reasons render this impossible in some instances, as in the case of Mrs. Barrett Browning. Each writer, I hope, is herein introduced by lines at once noteworthy for their own sake, and eminently characteristic of the author's genius or talent.

The scope of the volume covers—it will thus be seen—practically new ground. I do not think that the poetry enshrined herein requires any apology from me or from any one: it speaks for itself, and —to my mind, at any rate—conclusively enough. No inconsiderable portion of it is culled from the writings of unknown writers and of authors of very limited reputation: but I am convinced that there is a greater wealth of really fine poetic writing at present to be found in more or less obscure quarters than has ever appeared at any other period of our literary history.

The idea of making this and the earlier anthology, "Women's Voices," of which it is the

outcome, being, as it is, but a revised, occasionally changed, and considerably amplified version of the later period more lightly covered by that book, arose primarily from the conviction that our women-poets had never been collectively represented with anything like adequate justice; that the works of many are not so widely known as they deserved to be; and that at least some fine fugitive poetry could thus be rescued from oblivion. Women have had many serious hindrances to contend against—defective education, lack of broad experience of life, absence of freedom in which to make full use of natural abilities, and the force of public and private opinion, both of which have always been prone to prejudge their work unfavourably, or at best apologetically. These deterrent influences are gradually passing away, with the result that an ever-widening field for the exercise of their powers is thus afforded to women.

Mrs. Barrett Browning, who, with all her weaknesses of style, towers above all women-poets of the first half of the Victorian Era, has eloquently written upon the stunting effects of ordinary life upon women in "Aurora Leigh," that wonderful book, so strong and at the same time so full of blemishes. Romney Leigh inveighs against women-writers as follows:—

"You generalise
Oh, nothing,—not even grief! Your quick-breathed hearts,
So sympathetic to the personal pang,
Close on each separate knife-stroke, yielding up
A whole life at each wound, incapable
Of deepening, widening the large lap of life
To hold the world-full woe. The human race
To you means, such a child, or such a man,
You saw one morning waiting in the cold,
Beside that gate, perhaps. You gather up
A few such cases, and when strong sometimes
Will write of factories and of slaves, as if
Your father were a negro, and your son
A spinner in the mills. All's yours and you,
All, coloured with your blood, or otherwise
Just nothing to you. Why, I call you hard
To general suffering. Here's the world half blind
With intellectual light, half brutalised
With civilisation, having caught the plague
In silks from Tarsus, shrieking east and west
Along a thousand railroads, mad with pain
And sin too! . . . does one woman of you all
(You who weep easily) grow pale to see
This tiger shake his cage?—does one of you
Stand still from dancing, stop from stringing pearls,
And pine and die because of the great sum
Of universal anguish?—Show me a tear
Wet as Cordelia's, in eyes bright as yours.
Because the world is mad. You cannot count,
That you should weep for this account, not you!
You weep for what you know. A red-haired child
Sick in a fever, if you touch him once,
Though but so little as with a finger-tip,
Will set you weeping; but a million sick . . . . .
You could as soon weep for the rule of three
Or compound fractions. Therefore, this same world

So comprehended by you, must remain
Uninfluenced by you.—Women as you are,
Mere women, personal and passionate,
You give us doating mothers, perfect wives,
Sublime madonnas, and enduring saints!
We get no Christ from you,—and verily
We shall not get a poet, in my mind."

Aurora Leigh proves by her life and works what a woman may do; and elsewhere in the book she tells to Romney the poet's mission in the world :—

"I hold you will not compass your poor ends
Of barley feeding and material ease,
Without a poet's individualism
To work your universal. It takes a soul
To move a body: it takes a high-souled man
To move the masses, even to a cleaner stye:
It takes the ideal to blow a hair's-breadth off
The dust of the actual.—All your Fouriers failed
Because not poets enough to understand
That life develops from within."

It is easy to generalise what women have been and are—what they have done and are yet doing; because their surroundings and past influences, deterrent and otherwise, can be neatly summed up, and deductions "to order" drawn therefrom to a nicety. But who shall predict what woman will do in the future? Daily, yearly, prejudices are being broken down, fetters are falling off; women are ushered into knowledge and to experiences of life through wider

doors; legitimate freedom is now partly theirs, and before long will be theirs as wholly as it belongs to men. Who, therefore, can predict exactly what will be or will not be the outcome of these growing possibilities? The promise of to-day is so manifold that the morrow which is at hand can hardly but be one of lofty aim and high accomplishment.

The claim of the present editor, therefore, is that the following selections will further emphasise the value of women's work in poetry even for those who are already well acquainted with English Literature, and that they will convince many it is as possible to form an anthology of "pure poetry" from the writings of women as from those of men. She found, as she trusts others may, that the collection thus made pointed to a steady development of intellectual power, certainly not unaccompanied by artistic faculty—a fact which gives further sanction to the belief that still finer work will be produced in future by women-poets.

Doubtless, many young writers have been overlooked, among them, perhaps, some whose voices will sing with no uncertain note in coming years; other writers are unrepresented, either because of private reasons of their own, or on account of copyright prohibitions. Particularly to be regretted is the unavoidable absence of some representative

poems by Mrs. Margaret L. Woods, author of the now well-known "The Village Tragedy," and of a volume of poems distinguished by qualities rarely found in combination—great technical skill, virile imagination, and almost austere reserve. She is fond of novel metrical effects; but whether her verse be conventional or not in form, it invariably shows the touch of the literary artist. One of the most characteristic of her lyrics is that entitled "Rest," three stanzas of which will suffice as well as anything else to give some hint of this writer's poetic quality:—

"To hear the breezes sigh
Cool in the silver leaves like falling rain,
Pause and go by,
Tired wanderers o'er the solitary plain:

See far from all affright
Shy river creatures play hour after hour,
And night by night
Low in the West the white moon's folding flower.

Thus lost to human things,
To blend at last with Nature, and to hear
What song she sings
Low to herself when there is no one near."

The Editor wishes here to acknowledge the collaboration of living writers, who have so courteously contributed poems, or who have afforded her permission to make such selection from their works as she desired. To Mr. Richard

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ELIZABETH A. SHARP.

Women Poets.

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

ONWARD.

BENEATH this starry arch,
  Nought resteth or is still;
But all things hold their march,
  As if by one great will.
    Moves one, move all;
    Hark to the foot-fall!
      On, on, for ever.

Yon sheaves were once but seed;
Will ripens into deed;
As cave-drops swell the streams,
Day-thoughts feed mighty dreams;
And sorrow tracketh wrong,
As echo follows song.
    On, on, for ever.

By night, like stars on high,
The hours reveal their train;
They whisper and go by;
I never watch in vain.
Moves one, move all;
Hark to the foot-fall!
On, on, for ever.

They pass the cradle head,
And there a promise shed;
They pass the moist new grave,
And bid rank verdure wave;
They bear through every clime
The harvest of all time.
On, on, for ever.

SARA COLERIDGE.

SONG.

FROM "PHANTASMION."

How high yon lark is heavenward borne!
Yet, ere again she hails the morn,
Beyond where birds can wing their way,
Our souls may soar to endless day,
May hear the heavenly quires rejoice,
While earth still echoes to her voice.

A waveless flood supremely bright,
Has drown'd the myriad isles of light;
But, ere that ocean ebbed away,
The shadowy gulfs their forms betray:
Above the stars our course may run,
'Mid beams unborrow'd from the sun.

In this day's light what flowers will bloom,
What insects quit the self-made womb!
But ere the bud its leaves unfold,
The gorgeous fly his plumes of gold,
On fairer wings we too may glide,
Where youth and joy no ills betide.

Then come, while yet we linger here,
Fit thoughts for that celestial sphere,
A heart which under keenest light
May bear the gaze of spirits bright,
Who all things know, and nought endure
That is not holy, just, and pure.

ZELNETH'S LAMENT.

FROM "PHANTASMION."

By the storm invaded
Ere thy arch was wrought,
Rainbow, thou hast faded
Like a gladsome thought,
And ne'er mayst shine aloft in all earth's colours fraught.

Insect tranced for ever
In thy pendent bed,
Which the breezes sever
From its fragile thread,
Thou ne'er shalt burst thy cell and crumpled pinions spread.

Lily born and nourish'd
'Mid the waters cold,
Where thy green leaves flourish'd,
On the sunburnt mould
How canst thou rear thy stem and sallow buds unfold?

Snowy cloud suspended
O'er the orb of light,
With its radiance blended
Ne'er to glisten bright,
It sinks, and thou grow'st black beneath the wings of night.

PHANTASMION'S QUEST OF IARINE.

Yon changeful cloud will soon thy aspect wear,
So bright it grows :—and now, by light winds shaken,—
O ever seen yet ne'er to be o'ertaken !—
Those waving branches seem thy billowy hair.

The cypress glades recall thy pensive air ;
Slow rills that wind like snakes amid the grass,
Thine eye's mild sparkle fling me as they pass,
Yet murmuring cry, *This fruitless Quest forbear !*

Nay, e'en amid the cataract's loud storm,
  Where foaming torrents from the crags are leaping,
Methinks I catch swift glimpses of thy form,
  Thy robe's light folds in airy tumult sweeping ;
Then silent are the falls : 'mid colours warm,
  Gleams the bright maze beneath their splendour sweeping.

LINES ON THE COMMON SAYING THAT LOVE IS BLIND.

PASSION is blind, not Love: *her* wond'rous might
Informs with threefold pow'r man's inward sight:—
To her deep glance the soul at large display'd
Shows all its mingled mass of light and shade:—
Then call her blind when she but turns her head,
Nor scans the fault for which her tears are shed.
Can dull Indifference or Hate's troubled gaze
See through the secret heart's mysterious maze?—
Can Scorn and Envy pierce "that dread abode,"
Where true faults rest beneath the eye of God?
Not theirs, 'mid inward darkness, to discern
The spiritual splendours shine and burn.
All bright endowments of a noble mind
They, who with joy behold them, soonest find;
And better now its stains of frailty know
Than they who fain would see it white as snow.

CAROLINE NORTON.

IFS.

Oh, if the winds could whisper what they hear,
When murmuring round at sunset through the grove;
If words were written on the streamlet clear,
So often spoken fearlessly above:
If tale-tell stars descending from on high,
Could image forth the thoughts of all that gaze,
Entranced upon that deep cerulean sky,
And count how few think *only* of their rays!

If the lulled heaving ocean could disclose
All that has passed upon her golden sand,
When the moon-lighted waves triumphant rose,
And dashed their spray upon the echoing strand.
If dews could tell how many tears have mixed
With the bright gem-like drops that Nature weeps,
If night could say how many eyes are fixed
On *her* dark shadows, while creation sleeps!

If echo, rising from her magic throne,
Repeated with her melody of voice
Each timid sigh—each whispered word and tone,
Which made the hearer's listening heart rejoice.
If nature could, unchecked, repeat aloud
All she hath heard and seen—must hear and see—
Where would the whispering, vowing, sighing crowd
Of lovers, and their blushing partners, be?

BABEL.

KNOW ye in ages past that tower
By human hands built strong and high?
Arch over arch, with magic power,
Rose proudly each successive hour,
To reach the happy sky.

It rose till human pride was crushed—
Quick came the unexpected change;
A moment every tone was hushed,
And then again they freely gushed,
But sounded wild and strange.

Quick, loud, and clear, each voice was heard,
Calling for lime, and stone, and wood,
All uttered words—but not one word,
More than the carol of a bird,
Their fellows understood.

Is there no Babel but that one,
The storied tower of other days?—
Where, round the giant pile of stone,
Pausing they stood—their labour done,
To listen in amaze.

Fair springs the tower of hope and fame,
When all our life is fairy land;
Till scarcely knowing what to blame,
Our fellows cease to feel the same—
We cease to understand.

Then when they coldly smile to hear
The burning dreams of earlier days;
The rapid fall from hope to fear,
When eyes whose every glance was dear,
Seem changing as they gaze:

Then, when we feel 'twere vain to speak
Of fervent hopes—aspirings high—
Of thoughts for which all words are weak—
Of wild far dreams, wherein we seek
Knowledge of earth and sky:

Of communings with nature's God,
When impulse deep the soul hath moved—
Of tears which sink within the sod,
Where, mingling with the valley clod,
Lies something we have loved.

Then cometh ours; and better theirs—
Of stranger tongues together brought,
Than that in which we all have shares,
A Babel in a world of cares—
Of feeling and of thought!

LADY DUFFERIN.

THE LAMENT OF THE IRISH EMIGRANT.

I'M sittin' on the stile, Mary,
Where we sat side by side,
On a bright May mornin', long ago,
When first you were my bride;
The corn was springin' fresh and green,
And the lark sang loud and high—
And the red was on your lip, Mary,
And the love-light in your eye.

The place is little changed, Mary,
The day is bright as then,
The lark's loud song is in my ear,
And the corn is green again;
But I miss the soft clasp of your hand,
And your breath, warm on my cheek;
And I still keep list'nin' for the words
You never more will speak.

'Tis but a step down yonder lane,
And the little church stands near—
The church where we were wed, Mary,
I see the spire from here.

But the graveyard lies between, Mary,
And my step might break your rest—
For I've laid you, darling, down to sleep,
With your baby on your breast.

I'm very lonely now, Mary,
For the poor make no new friends,
But, oh! they love the better still
The few our Father sends!
And you were all I had, Mary,
My blessin' and my pride!
There's nothing left to care for now,
Since my poor Mary died.

Yours was the good, brave heart, Mary,
That still kept hoping on,
When the trust in God had left my soul,
And my arm's young strength was gone;
There was comfort ever on your lip,
And the kind look on your brow—
I bless you, Mary, for that same,
Though you cannot hear me now.

I thank you for the patient smile
When your heart was fit to break,
When the hunger pain was gnawin' there,
And you hid it for my sake:

I bless you for the pleasant word
When your heart was sad and sore—
Oh, I'm thankful you are gone, Mary,
Where grief can't reach you more!

I'm biddin' you a long farewell,
My Mary—kind and true!
But I'll not forget you, darling,
In the land I'm going to;
They say there's bread and work for all,
And the sun shines always there—
But I'll not forget Old Ireland,
Were it fifty times as fair!

And often in those grand old woods
I'll sit and close my eyes,
And my heart will travel back again
To the place where Mary lies;
And I'll think I see the little stile
Where we sat side by side,
And the springin' corn, and the bright May morn,
When first you were my bride.

JANE WELSH CARLYLE.

TO A SWALLOW BUILDING UNDER OUR EAVES.

THOU too hast travelled, little fluttering thing—
Hast seen the world, and now thy weary wing
Thou too must rest.
But much, my little bird, couldst thou but tell,
I'd give to know why here thou lik'st so well
To build thy nest.

Thou hast passed fair places in thy flight;
A world lay all beneath thee where to light;
And, strange thy taste,
Of all the varied scenes that met thine eye—
Of all the spots for building 'neath the sky—
To choose this waste.

Did fortune try thee? was thy little purse
Perchance run low, and thou, afraid of worse,
Felt here secure?
Ah, no! thou need'st not gold, thou happy one!
Thou know'st it not. Of all God's creatures, man
Alone is poor.

What was it then? some mystic turn of thought,
Caught under German eaves, and hither brought,
Marring thine eye
For the world's loveliness, till thou art grown
A sober thing that does but mope and moan,
Not knowing why?

Nay, if thy mind be sound, I need not ask,
Since here I see thee working at thy task
With wing and beak.
A well-laid scheme doth that small head contain,
At which thou work'st, brave bird, with might and main,
Nor more need'st seek.

In truth, I rather take it thou hast got
By instinct wise much sense about thy lot,
And hast small care
Whether an Eden or a desert be
Thy home, so thou remain'st alive, and free
To skim the air.

God speed thee, pretty bird; may thy small nest
With little ones in all good time be blest.
I love thee much;
For well thou managest that life of thine,
While I! oh, ask not what I do with mine!
Would I were such!

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN.

"φεῦ, φεῦ, τι προσδερκεσθε μ' ομμασιν, τεκνα."

MEDEA.

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,—
And *that* cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows;
The young birds are chirping in the nest;
The young fawns are playing with the shadows;
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!—
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in their sorrow,
Why their tears are falling so?—
The old man may weep for his to-morrow
Which is lost in Long Ago—

The old tree is leafless in the forest—
The old year is ending in the frost—
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest—
The old hope is hardest to be lost:
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,
In our happy Fatherland?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's grief abhorrent, draws and presses
Down the cheeks of infancy—
"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary;"
"Our young feet," they say, "are very weak!
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—
Our grave-rest is very far to seek!
Ask the old why they weep, and not the children,
For the outside earth is cold,—
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,
And the graves are for the old!

"True," say the young children, "it may happen
That we die before our time!
Little Alice died last year—the grave is shapen
Like a snowball, in the rime.
We looked into the pit prepared to take her—
Was no room for any work in the close clay:
From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,
Crying, 'Get up, little Alice! it is day.'

If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries!—
Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,
For the smile has time for growing in her eyes,—
And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in
The shroud, by the kirk-chime!
It is good when it happens," say the children,
"That we die before our time!"

Alas, the wretched children! they are seeking
Death in life, as best to have!
They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,
With a cerement from the grave.
Go out, children, from the mine and from the city—
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do—
Pluck you handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty—
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through!
But they answer, "Are your cowslips of the meadows
Like our weeds anear the mine?
Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine!

"For oh," say the children, "we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap—
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping—
We fall upon our faces, trying to go;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.

For, all day, we drag our burden tiring,
Through the coal-dark, underground—
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

"For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning,—
Their wind comes in our faces,—
Till our hearts turn,—our heads, with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places—
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling—
Turns the long light that droppeth down the wall—
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling—
All are turning, all the day, and we with all!—
And all day, the iron wheels are droning;
And sometimes we could pray,
'O ye wheels' (breaking out in a mad moaning),
'Stop! be silent for to-day!'"

Ay! be silent! Let them hear each other breathing
For a moment, mouth to mouth—
Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing
Of their tender human youth!
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
Is not all the life God fashions or reveals—
Let them prove their inward souls against the notion
That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!—
Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,
As if Fate in each were stark;
And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward,
Spin on blindly in the dark.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,
That they look to Him and pray—
So the blessed One, who blesseth all the others,
Will bless them another day.
They answer, "Who is God that He should hear us,
While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred?
When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us
Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word!
And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)
Strangers speaking at the door;
Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him,
Hears our weeping any more?

"Two words, indeed, of praying we remember;
And at midnight's hour of harm,—
'Our Father,' looking upward in the chamber,
We say softly for a charm.
We know no other words, except 'Our Father,'
And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,
God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,
And hold both within His right hand which is strong.
'Our father!' If he heard us, He would surely
(For they call Him good and mild)
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely
'Come and rest with me, my child.'

"But, no!" say the children, weeping faster,
"He is speechless as a stone?
And they tell us, of His image is the master
Who commands us to work on.

Go to!" say the children,—"Up in Heaven,
Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find!
Do not mock us; grief has made us unbelieving—
We look up for God, but tears have made us blind."
Do ye hear the children weeping and disproving,
O my brothers, what ye preach?
For God's possible is taught by His world's loving—
And the children doubt of each.

And well may the children weep before you;
They are weary ere they run;
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory
Which is brighter than the sun:
They know the grief of men, but not the wisdom;
They sink in the despair, without the calm—
Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,—
Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm,—
Are worn, as if with age, yet unretrievingly
No dear remembrance keep,—
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly:
Let them weep! let them weep!

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For you think you see their angels in their places,
With eyes meant for Deity;—
"How long," they say, "how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart,

Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O our tyrants,
And your purple shows your path;
But the child's sob curseth deeper in the silence
Than the strong man in his wrath!"

THE DEAD PAN.

[Excited by Schiller's "Götter Griechenlands," and partly founded on a well-known tradition mentioned in a treatise of Plutarch ("De Oraculorum Defectu"), according to which, at the hour of the Saviour's agony, a cry of "Great Pan is dead!" swept across the waves in the hearing of certain mariners,—and the oracles ceased.

It is in all veneration to the memory of the deathless Schiller, that I oppose a doctrine still more dishonouring to poetry than to Christianity.

As Mr. Kenyon's graceful and harmonious paraphrase of the German poem was the first occasion of the turning of my thoughts in this direction, I take advantage of the pretence to indulge my feelings (which overflow on other grounds) by inscribing my lyric to that dear friend and relative, with the earnestness of appreciating esteem as well as of affectionate gratitude.—E. B. B.]

GODS of Hellas, gods of Hellas,
Can ye listen in your silence?
Can your mystic voices tell us
Where ye hide? In floating islands,
With a wind that evermore
Keeps you out of sight of shore?
Pan, Pan is dead.

In what revels are ye sunken
In old Æthiopia?
Have the Pygmies made you drunken,
Bathing in mandragora

Your divine pale lips that shiver
Like the lotus in the river?
Pan, Pan is dead.

Do ye sit there still in slumber,
In gigantic Alpine rows?
The black poppies out of number
Nodding, dripping from your brows
To the red lees of your wine,—
And so kept alive and fine?
Pan, Pan is dead.

Or lie crushed your stagnant corses
Where the silver spheres roll on,
Stung to life by centric forces
Thrown like rays out from the sun!—
While the smoke of your old altars
Is the shroud that round you welters?
Great Pan is dead.

Gods of Hellas, gods of Hellas,
Said the old Hellenic tongue!
Said the hero-oaths, as well as
Poets' songs the sweetest sung!
Have ye grown deaf in a day?
Can ye speak not yea or nay,—
Since Pan is dead?

Do ye leave your rivers flowing
All alone, O Naiades,

While your drenched locks dry slow in
This cold feeble sun and breeze?—
Not a word the Naiades say,
Though the rivers run for aye.
For Pan is dead.

From the gloaming of the oak wood,
O ye Dryads, could ye flee?
At the rushing thunderstroke, would
No sob tremble through the tree?—
Not a word the Dryads say,
Though the forests wave for aye.
For Pan is dead.

Have ye left the mountain places,
Oreads wild, for other tryst?
Shall we see no sudden faces
Strike a glory through the mist?
Not a sound the silence thrills,
Of the everlasting hills.
Pan, Pan is dead.

O twelve gods of Plato's vision,
Crowned to starry wanderings,—
With your chariots in procession,
And your silver clash of wings!
Very pale ye seem to rise,
Ghosts of Grecian deities—
Now Pan is dead!

Jove! that right hand is unloaded,
Whence the thunder did prevail:
While in idiocy of godhead,
Thou art staring the stars pale!
And thine eagle, blind and old,
Roughs his feathers in the cold.
Pan, Pan is dead.

Where, O Juno, is the glory
Of thy regal look and tread?
Will they lay, for evermore, thee,
On thy dim, straight, golden bed?
Will thy queendom all lie hid
Meekly under either lid?
Pan, Pan is dead.

Ha, Apollo! floats his golden
Hair all mist-like where he stands;
While the Muses hang enfolding
Knee and foot with faint wild hands?
'Neath the clanging of thy bow,
Niobe looked lost as thou!
Pan, Pan is dead.

Shall the casque with its brown iron,
Pallas' broad blue eyes, eclipse,—
And no hero take inspiring
From the God-Greek of her lips?
'Neath her olive dost thou sit,
Mars the mighty, cursing it?
Pan, Pan is dead.

Bacchus, Bacchus! on the panther
He swoons,—bound with his own vines!
And his Mænads slowly saunter,
Head aside, among the pines,
While they murmur dreamingly,—
"Evohe—ah—evohe—"
Ah, Pan is dead!

Neptune lies beside the trident,
Dull and senseless as a stone:
And old Pluto deaf and silent
Is cast out into the sun.
Ceres smileth stern thereat,—
"We *all* now are desolate"—
Now Pan is dead.

Aphrodite! dead and driven
As thy native foam, thou art;
With the cestus long done heaving
On the white calm of thine heart!
Ai Adonis! At that shriek
Not a tear runs down her cheek—
Pan, Pan is dead.

And the Loves, we used to know from
One another,—huddled lie,
Frore as taken in a snow-storm,
Close beside her tenderly,—
As if each had weakly tried
Once to kiss her as he died.
Pan, Pan is dead.

What, and Hermes! Time enthralleth
All thy cunning, Hermes, thus,—
And the ivy blindly crawleth
Round thy brave caduceus?
Hast thou no new message for us,
Full of thunder and Jove-glories?
Nay! Pan is dead.

Crowned Cybele's great turret
Rocks and crumbles on her head:
Roar the lions of her chariot
Toward the wilderness, unfed:
Scornful children are not mute,—
"Mother, mother, walk a-foot—
Since Pan is dead!"

In the fiery-hearted centre
Of the solemn universe,
Ancient Vesta,—who could enter
To consume thee with this curse?
Drop thy grey chin on thy knee,
O thou palsied Mystery!
For Pan is dead.

Gods! we vainly do adjure you,—
Ye return nor voice nor sign:
Not a votary could secure you
Even a grave for your Divine!
Not a grave, to show thereby,
Here these grey old gods do lie!
Pan, Pan is dead.

Even that Greece who took our wages,
Calls the obolus outworn :
And the hoarse, deep-throated ages
Laugh your godships unto scorn—
And the poets do disclaim you,
Or grow colder if they name you—
And Pan is dead.

Gods bereaved, gods belated,—
With your purples rent asunder !
Gods discrowned and desecrated,
Disinherited of thunder !
Now, the goats may climb and crop
The soft grass on Ida's top—
Now, Pan is dead.

Calm, of old, the bark went onward,
When a cry more loud than wind,
Rose up, deepened, and swept sunward,
From the pilèd Dark behind:
And the sun shrank and grew pale,
Breathed against by the great wail—
Pan, Pan is dead.

And the rowers from the benches
Fell,—each shuddering on his face—
While departing Influences
Struck a cold back through the place:
And the shadow of the ship
Reeled along the passive deep—
Pan, Pan is dead.

And that dismal cry rose slowly,
And sank slowly through the air;
Full of spirit's melancholy
And eternity's despair!
And they heard the words it said—
PAN IS DEAD—GREAT PAN IS DEAD—
PAN, PAN IS DEAD.

'Twas the hour when One in Sion
Hung for love's sake on a cross—
When His brow was chill with dying,
And His soul was faint with loss;
When His priestly blood dropped downward,
And His kingly eyes looked throneward—
Then, Pan was dead.

By the love He stood alone in,
His sole Godhead stood complete:
And the false gods fell down moaning,
Each from off his golden seat—
All the false gods with a cry
Rendered up their deity—
Pan, Pan was dead.

Wailing wide across the islands,
They rent, vest-like, their Divine!
And a darkness and a silence
Quenched the light of every shrine:
And Dodona's oak swang lonely
Henceforth, to the tempest only,
Pan, Pan was dead.

Pythia staggered,—feeling o'er her,
Her lost god's forsaking look,
Straight her eyeballs filmed with horror,
And her crispy fillets shook—
And her lips gasped through their foam,
For a word that did not come.
Pan, Pan was dead.

O ye vain false gods of Hellas,
Ye are silent evermore!
And I dash down this old chalice
Whence libations ran of yore.
See! the wine crawls in the dust
Wormlike—as your glories must!
Since Pan is dead.

Get to dust, as common mortals,
By a common doom and track!
Let no Schiller from the portals
Of that Hades, call you back
Or instruct us to weep all
At your antique funeral.
Pan, Pan is dead.

By your beauty, which confesses
Some chief Beauty conquering you,—
By our grand heroic guesses,
Through your falsehood, at the True,—
We will weep *not* . . .! earth shall roll
Heir to each god's aureole—
And Pan is dead.

Earth outgrows the mythic fancies
Sung beside her in her youth:
And those debonaire romances
Sound but dull beside the truth.
Phœbus' chariot-course is run!
Look up, poets, to the sun!
Pan, Pan is dead.

Christ hath sent us down the angels;
And the whole earth and the skies
Are illumed by altar-candles
Lit for blessed mysteries.
And a Priest's Hand, through creation,
Waveth calm and consecration—
And Pan is dead.

Truth is fair: should we forego it?
Can we sigh right for a wrong?
God Himself is the best Poet,
And the Real is His song.
Sing His truth out fair and full,
And secure His beautiful.
Let Pan be dead.

Truth is large. Our aspiration
Scarce embraces half we be.
Shame! to stand in His creation
And doubt Truth's sufficiency!—
To think God's song unexcelling
The poor tales of our own telling—
When Pan is dead!

What is true and just and honest,
What is lovely, what is pure—
All of praise that hath admonisht,—
All of virtue, shall endure—
These are themes for poets' uses,
Stirring nobler than the Muses—
Ere Pan was dead.

O brave poets, keep back nothing;
Nor mix falsehood with the whole!
Look up Godward! speak the truth in
Worthy song from earnest soul!
Hold, in high poetic duty,
Truest Truth the fairest Beauty!
Pan, Pan is dead.

A LAY OF THE EARLY ROSE.

——"discordance that can accord."
Romaunt of the Rose.

A ROSE once grew within
A garden April-green,
In her loneness, in her loneness,
And the fairer for that oneness.

A white rose delicate,
On a tall bow and straight!
Early comer, early comer,
Never waiting for the summer.

Her pretty gestes did win
South winds to let her in,
In her loneness, in her loneness,
All the fairer for that oneness.

"For if I wait," said she,
"Till times for roses be,—
For the musk-rose and the moss-rose,
Royal-red and maiden-blush rose,—

"What glory then for me
In such a company?—
Roses plenty, roses plenty,
And one nightingale for twenty?

"Nay, let me in," said she,
"Before the rest are free,—
In my loneness, in my loneness,
All the fairer for that oneness.

"For I would lonely stand,
Uplifting my white hand,—
On a mission, on a mission,
To declare the coming vision.

"Upon which lifted sign,
What worship will be mine?
What addressing, what caressing!
And what thanks, and praise, and blessing!

"A windlike joy will rush
Through every tree and bush,
Bending softly in affection
And spontaneous benediction.

"Insects, that only may
Live in a sunbright ray,
To my whiteness, to my whiteness,
Shall be drawn, as to a brightness,—

"And every moth and bee,
Approach me reverently;
Wheeling o'er me, wheeling o'er me,
Coronals of motioned glory.

"Three larks shall leave a cloud;
To my whiter beauty vowed—
Singing gladly all the moontide,—
Never waiting for the suntide.

"Ten nightingales shall flee
Their woods for love of me,—
Singing sadly all the suntide,
Never waiting for the moontide.

"I ween the very skies
Will look down with surprise,
When low on earth they see me,
With my starry aspect dreamy!

"And earth will call her flowers
To hasten out of doors,—
By their curtsies and sweet-smelling,
To give grace to my foretelling."

So praying, did she win
South winds to let her in,
In her loneness, in her loneness,
And the fairer for that oneness.

But ah!—alas for her!
No thing did minister
To her praises, to her praises,
More than might unto a daisy's.

No tree nor bush was seen
To boast a perfect green;
Scarcely having, scarcely having,
One leaf broad enough for waving.

The little flies did crawl
Along the southern wall,—
Faintly shifting, faintly shifting
Wings scarce strong enough for lifting.

The lark, too high or low,
I ween, did miss her so;
With his nest down in the gorses,
And his song in the star-courses!

The nightingale did please
To loiter beyond seas.
Guess him in the happy islands,
Learning music from the silence!

Only the bee, forsooth,
Came in the place of both;
Doing honour, doing honour,
To the honey-dews upon her.

The skies looked coldly down,
As on a royal crown;
Then with drop for drop, at leisure,
They began to rain for pleasure.

Whereat the earth did seem
To waken from a dream,
Winter-frozen, winter-frozen,
Her unquiet eyes unclosing—

Said to the Rose—"Ha, Snow!
And art thou fallen so?
Thou, who wert enthroned stately
All along my mountains, lately?

"Holla, thou world-wide snow!
And art thou wasted so?
With a little bough to catch thee,
And a little bee to watch thee?"

—Poor Rose to be misknown!
Would, she had ne'er been blown,
In her loneness, in her loneness,—
All the sadder for that oneness!

Some word she tried to say—
Some *no* . . . ah, wellaway!
But the passion did o'ercome her,
And the fair frail leaves dropped from her—

Dropped from her, fair and mute,
Close to a poet's foot,
Who beheld them, smiling slowly,
As at something sad yet holy:

Said, "Verily and thus
It chanceth eke with *us*
Poets singing sweetest snatches,
While that deaf men keep the watches—

"Vaunting to come before
Our own age evermore,
In a loneness, in a loneness,
And the nobler for that oneness!

"Holy in voice and heart,—
To high ends, set apart!
All unmated, all unmated,
Because so consecrated!

"But if alone we be,
Where is our empery?
And if none can reach our stature,
Who can praise our lofty nature?

"What bell will yield a tone,
Swung in the air alone?
If no brazen clapper bringing,
Who can hear the chimed ringing?

"What angel, but would seem
To sensual eyes, ghost-dim?
And without assimilation,
Vain is inter-penetration?

"And thus, what can we do,
Poor rose and poet too,
Who both antedate our mission
In an unprepared season?

"Drop leaf—be silent song—
Cold things we come among!
We must warm them, we must warm them,
Ere we ever hope to charm them.

"Howbeit" (here his face
Lightened around the place,—
So to mark the outward turning
Of his spirit's inward burning)—

"Something, it is, to hold
In God's worlds manifold,
First revealed to creature-duty,
Some new form of His mild Beauty!

"Whether that form respect
The sense or intellect,
Holy be in soul or pleasance,
The Chief Beauty's sign of presence!

"Holy, in me and thee,
Rose fallen from the tree,—
Though the world stand dumb around us,
All unable to expound us!

"Though none us deign to bless,
Blessed are we, nathless!
Blessed still, and consecrated,
In that, rose, we were created.

"Oh, shame to poet's lays
Sung for the dole of praise,—
Hoarsely sung upon the highway
With that *obolum da mihi.*

"Shame, shame to poet's soul,
Pining for such a dole,
When Heaven-chosen to inherit
The high throne of a chief spirit!

"Sit still upon your thrones,
O ye poetic ones!
And if, sooth, the world decry you,
Let it pass, unchallenged by you!

"Ye to yourselves suffice,
Without its flatteries.
Self-contentedly approve you
Unto HIM who sits above you,—

"In prayers—that upward mount
Like to a fair-sunned fount
Which, in gushing back upon you,
Hath an upper music won you,—

"In faith—that still perceives
No rose can shed her leaves,
Far less, poet fall from mission—
With an unfulfilled fruition!

"In hope—that apprehends
An end beyond these ends;
And great uses rendered duly
By the meanest song sung truly!

"In thanks—for all the good,
By poets understood—
For the sound of seraphs moving
Down the hidden depths of loving,—

"For sights of things away,
Through fissures of the clay,
Promised things which *shall* be given
And sung over, up in Heaven,—

"For life, so lovely-vain,—
For death, which breaks the chain,—
For this sense of present sweetness,—
And this yearning to completeness!"

A RHAPSODY OF LIFE'S PROGRESS.

"*Fill all the stops of life with tuneful breath.*"
"Poems on Man," by CORNELIUS MATHEWS.*

WE are borne into life—it is sweet, it is strange!
We lie still on the knee of a mild Mystery,
Which smiles with a change!
But we doubt not of changes, we know not of spaces;
The Heavens seem as near as our own mother's face is,
And we think we could touch all the stars that we see;
And the milk of our mother is white on our mouth!
And, with small childish hands, we are turning around
The apple of Life which another has found:—
It is warm with our touch, not with sun of the south,
And we count, as we turn it, the red side for four—
O life, O Beyond,
Thou art sweet, thou art strange evermore.

Then all things look strange in the pure golden æther:
We walk through the gardens with hands linked together,
And the lilies look large as the trees;
And as loud as the birds, sing the bloom-loving bees,—
And the birds sing like angels, so mystical fine;

* A small volume, by an American poet—as remarkable, in thought and manner, for a vital sinewy vigour, as the right arm of Pathfinder.

And the cedars are brushing the archangel's feet;
And time is eternity,—love is divine,
And the world is complete!
Now, God bless the child,—father, mother, respond.
O Life, O beyond,
Thou art strange, thou art sweet.

Then we leap on the earth with the armour of youth,
And the earth rings again!
And we breathe out, "O beauty,"—we cry out, "O truth,"
And the bloom of our lips drops with wine;
And our blood runs amazed 'neath the calm hyaline,—
The earth cleaves to the foot, the sun burns to the brain,—
What is this exultation, and what this despair—
The strong pleasure is smiting the nerves into pain,
And we drop from the Fair, as we climb to the Fair,
And we lie in a trance at its feet;
And the breath of an angel cold-piercing the air
Breathes fresh on our faces in swoon;
And we think him so near, he is this side the sun!
And we wake to a whisper self-murmured and fond,
O Life, O beyond,
Thou art strange, thou art sweet!

And the winds and the waters in pastoral measures
Go winding around us, with roll upon roll,
Till the soul lies within in a circle of pleasures,
Which hideth the soul!

And we run with the stag, and we leap with the horse,
And we swim with the fish through the broad water-course,
And we strike with the falcon, and hunt with the hound,
And the joy which is in us, flies out with a wound;
And we shout so aloud, "We exult, we rejoice,"
That we lose the low moan of our brothers around,—
And we shout so adeep down creation's profound,
We are deaf to God's voice—
And we bind the rose-garland on forehead and ears,
Yet we are not ashamed;
And the dew of the roses that runneth unblamed
Down our cheeks, is not taken for tears.
Help us God, trust us man, love us woman! "I hold
Thy small head in my hands,—with its grapelets of gold
Growing bright through my fingers,—like altar for oath,
'Neath the vast golden spaces like witnessing faces
That watch the eternity strong in the troth—
I love thee, I leave thee,—
Live for thee, die for thee!
I prove thee, deceive thee,—
Undo evermore thee!
Help me God, slay me man!—one is mourning for both!"
And we stand up, though young, near the funeral-sheet
Which covers the Cæsar and old Pharamond;
And death is so nigh us, Life cools from its heat—
O Life, O Beyond,
Art thou fair,—*art* thou sweet?

Then we act to a purpose—we spring up erect—
We will tame the wild mouths of the wilderness-steeds;
We will plough up the deep in the ships double-decked;
We will build the great cities, and do the great deeds,—
Strike the steel upon steel, strike the soul upon soul,
Strike the dole on the weal, overcoming the dole,—
Let the cloud meet the cloud in a grand thunder-roll!
While the eagle of Thought rides the tempest in scorn,
Who cares if the lightning is burning the corn?
"Let us sit on the thrones
In a purple sublimity,
And grind down men's bones
To a pale unanimity!
Speed me, God!—serve me, man!—I am god over men!
When I speak in my cloud, none shall answer again—
'Neath the stripe and the bond,
Lie and mourn at my feet!"—
O thou Life, O Beyond,
Thou art strange, thou art sweet!

Then we grow into thought,—and with inward ascensions,
Touch the bounds of our Being!
We lie in the dark here, swathed doubly around
With our sensual relations and social conventions,—
Yet are 'ware of a sight, yet are 'ware of a sound
Beyond Hearing and Seeing,—
Are aware that a Hades rolls deep on all sides,
With its infinite tides,
About and above us,—until the strong arch
Of our life creaks and bends as if ready for falling,

And through all the dim rolling, we hear the sweet calling
Of spirits that speak, in a soft under-tongue,
The interpretive sense of the mystical march:
And we cry to them softly, "Come nearer, come nearer,—
And lift up the lap of this Dark, and speak clearer,
And teach us the song that ye sung."
And we smile in our thought, if they answer or no,—
For to dream of a sweetness is sweet as to know!
Wonders breathe in our face,
And we ask not their name;
And Love takes all the blame
Of the world's prison-place.
And we sing back the songs as we guess them, aloud;
And we send up the lark of our music that cuts
Untired through the cloud,
To beat with its wings at the lattice Heaven shuts:
Yet the angels look down, and the mortals look up,
As the little wings beat,
And the poet is blessed with their pity or hope.
'Twixt the Heavens and the earth, *can* a poet despond?
O Life, O Beyond,
Thou art strange, thou art sweet!

Then we wring from our souls their applicative strength,
And bend to the cord the strong bow of our ken;
And bringing our lives to the level of others,
Hold the cup we have filled, to their uses at length.
"Help me, God! love me, man! I am man among men,—

And my life is a pledge
Of the ease of another's!"
From the fire and the water we drive out the steam,
With a rush and a roar, and the speed of a dream!
And the car without horses, the car without wings,
Roars onward and flies
On its pale iron edge,
'Neath the heat of a Thought sitting still in our eyes—
And the hand knots in air, with the bridge that it flings,
Two peaks far disrupted by ocean and skies—
And, lifting a fold of the smooth-flowing Thames,
Draws under, the world, with its turmoils and pothers;
While the swans float on softly, untouched in their calms
By Humanity's hum at the root of the springs!
And with reachings of Thought we reach down to the deeps
Of the souls of our brothers,
And teach them full words with our slow-moving lips,
"God," "Liberty," "Truth,"—which they hearken and think,
And work into harmony, link upon link,
Till the silver meets round the earth gelid and dense,
Shedding sparks of electric respondence intense
On the dark of eclipse.
Then we hear through the silence and glory afar,
As from shores of a star
In aphelion,—the new generations that cry
In attune to our voice and harmonious reply,
"God," "Liberty," "Truth!"
We are glorious forsooth—

And our name has a seat,
Though the shroud should be donned!
O Life, O Beyond,
Thou art strange, thou art sweet!

Help me, God—help me, man! I am low, I am weak—
Death loosens my sinews and creeps in my veins;
My body is cleft by these wedges of pains,
From my spirit's serene;
And I feel the externe and insensate creep in
On my organised clay.
I sob not, nor shriek,
Yet I faint fast away!
I am strong in the spirit,—deep-thoughted, clear-eyed,—
I could walk, step for step, with an angel beside,
On the Heaven-heights of Truth!
Oh, the soul keeps its youth—
But the body faints sore, it is tired in the race,—
It sinks from the chariot ere reaching the goal;
It is weak, it is cold,
The rein drops from its hold—
It sinks back, with the death in its face!
On, chariot—on, soul,—
Ye are all the more fleet—
Be alone at the goal
Of the strange and the sweet!

Love us, God, love us, man! we believe, we achieve—
Let us love, let us live,
For the acts correspond—

We are glorious—and DIE!
And again on the knee of a mild Mystery
That smiles with a change,
Here we lie!
O DEATH, O BEYOND,
Thou art sweet, thou art strange!

FUTURITY.

AND, O beloved voices, upon which
Ours passionately call, because erelong
Ye broke off in the middle of that song
We sang together softly, to enrich
The poor world with the sense of love, and witch
The heart out of things evil,—I am strong,—
Knowing ye are not lost for aye among
The hills, with last year's thrush. God keeps a niche
In heaven to hold our idols! and albeit
He broke them to our faces, and denied
That our close kisses should impair their white,—
I know we shall behold them raised complete,—
The dust shook from their beauty,—glorified
New Memnons singing in the great God-light.

PERPLEXED MUSIC.

EXPERIENCE, like a pale musician, holds
A dulcimer of patience in his hand;
Whence harmonies we cannot understand,
Of God's will in His worlds, the strain unfolds
In sad perplexed minors. Deathly colds
Fall on us while we hear and countermand
Our sanguine heart back from the fancy-land,
With nightingales in visionary wolds.
We murmur,—"Where is any certain tune
Or measured music, in such notes as these?"—
But angels, leaning from the golden seat,
Are not so minded! their fine ear hath won
The issue of completed cadences;
And, smiling down the stars, they whisper—SWEET.

THE SOUL'S EXPRESSION.

With stammering lips and insufficient sound,
I strive and struggle to deliver right
The music of my nature, day and night
With dream and thought and feeling, interwound:
And inly answering all the senses round
With octaves of a mystic depth and height,
Which step out grandly to the infinite
From the dark edges of the sensual ground!
This song of soul I struggle to outbear
Through portals of the sense, sublime and whole,
And utter all myself into the air:
But if I did it,—as the thunder-roll
Breaks its own cloud,—my flesh would perish there,
Before that dread apocalypse of soul.

MARY COWDEN-CLARKE.

AT MIDNIGHT OF "ALL SOULS."

I HEAR the rushing of the sea of Time;
  Whose mighty waters in their pauseless whelm,
  Suck down, resistless, nation, race, and realm,
Like rotting sea-weed, drench'd in ooze and slime.
Ocean! incarnardin'd with countless crime,
Green with drown'd hopes, and wreck of joyous prime;
  Salt with the myriad tears of human woes;
  Toss'd with the surge and tumult of earth's throes;
We note thy shifting sands, and pace thy shore;
We watch thy ebbing tides, and list thy roar,
  Heark'ning, with awe, th' innumerable things
  Told in thy billowy thunderings;
Until by the coming of our one appointed wave,
We're swept into th' eddy of that universal grave.

FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE.

WINTER.

I saw him on his throne, far in the North,
Him ye call Winter, picturing him ever
An aged man, whose frame with palsied shiver
Bends o'er the fiery element, his foe.
But him I saw was a young god whose brow
Was crown'd with jagged icicles, and forth
From his keen spirit-like eyes there shone a light
Broad, glaring, and intensely cold and bright.
His breath, like sharp-edged arrows, pierced the air;
The naked earth crouched shuddering at his feet;
His finger on all murmuring waters sweet
Lay icily,—motion nor sound was there;
Nature seem'd frozen—dead; and still and slow
A winding sheet fell o'er her features fair,
Flaky and white from his white wings of snow.

SONNET.

I HEAR a low voice in the sunset woods;
  Listen, it says: "Decay, decay, decay."
I hear it in the murmuring of the floods,
  And the wind sighs it as it flies away.
Autumn is come; seest thou not in the skies
The stormy light of his fierce, lurid eyes?
Autumn is come; his brazen feet have trod,
Withering and scorching, o'er the mossy sod.
The fainting year sees her fresh flowery wreath
Shrivel in his hot grasp; his burning breath
Dries the sweet water-springs that in the shade,
Wandering along, delicious music made.
A flood of glory hangs upon the world,
Summer's bright wings shining ere they are furled.

SONNET.

ART thou already weary of the way,
Thou who hast yet but half the way gone o'er?
Get up, and lift thy burthen; lo, before
Thy feet the road goes stretching far away.
If thou already faint who art but come
Through half thy pilgrimage, with fellows gay,
Love, youth, and hope, under the rosy bloom
And temperate airs of early breaking day—
Look yonder, how the heavens stoop and gloom.
There cease the trees to shade, the flowers to spring,
And the angels leave thee. What wilt thou become
Through yon drear stretch of dismal wandering,
Lonely and dark? *I shall take courage, friend,*
For comes not every step more near the end.

JANET HAMILTON

A BALLAD OF MEMORIE.

NAE mair, alas! nae mair I'll see
  Young mornin's gowden[1] hair
Spread o'er the lift[2]—the dawnin' sheen
  O' simmer mornin' fair!
Nae mair the heathery knowe[3] I'll speel,
  An' see the sunbeams glancin',
Like fire-flauchts ower the loch's lane breast,
  Ower whilk[4] the breeze is dancin'.

Nae mair I'll wanner ower the braes,
  Or thro' the birken shaw,[5]
An' pu' the wild-wud flowers amang
  Thy lanely glens, Roseha'!
How white the haw, how red the rose,
  How blue the hy'cinth bell,
Whaur fairy thim'les woo the bees
  In Tenach's breckan dell!

[1] Golden. [2] Air, sky. [3] Knoll. [4] Which. [5] Birch-wood.

Nae mair when hinnysuckle hings
Her garlands on the trees,
And hinny breath o' heather bells
Comes glaffin' on the breeze;
Nor whan the burstin' birken buds,
And sweetly scented brier,
Gi'e oot their sweets, nae power they ha'e
My dowie heart to cheer.

Nae mair I'll hear the cushie-doo,[1]
Wi' voice o' tender wailin',
Pour out her plaint; nor laverock's[2] sang,
Up 'mang the white clouds sailin';
The lappin' waves that kiss the shore,
The music o' the streams,
The roarin' o' the linn nae mair
I'll hear but in my dreams.

Whan a' the hoose are gane to sleep
I sit my leefu'[3] lane,
An' muse till fancy streaks her wing,
An' I am young again.
Again I wanner thro' the wuds,
Again I seem to sing
Some waefu' auld-warld ballant strain,
Till a' the echoes ring.

[1] Wood-dove. [2] Lark. [3] Joyful, happy.

Again the snaw-white howlit's wing
  Out ower my heid is flaffin',
When frae her nest 'mang Calder craigs
  I fley't[1] her wi' my daffin';[2]
An' keekin'[3] in the mavis'[4] nest
  O naked scuddies[5] fu',
I feed wi' moolins[6] out my pouch
  Ilk gapin' hungry mou.

Again I wanner ower the lea,
  "An' pu' the gowans fine;
Again I paidle[7] in the burn,"
  But, oh, it's lang-sin-syne!
Again your faces blithe I see,
  Your gladsome voices hear—
Frien's o' my youth—a' gane, a' gane!
  An' I sit blinlins[8] here.

The star o' memory lichts the past;
  But there's a licht abune
To cheer the darkness o' a life
  That maun be endit sune.
An' aft I think the gowden morn,
  The purple gloamin' fa',
Will shine as bricht, an' fa' as saft,
  Whan I hae gane awa'.

[1] Frighten, startle. [3] Peeping. [5] Nude. [7] Paddle.
[2] Merriment. [4] Thrush. [6] Crumbs. [8] Blind.

ELIZA COOK.

THE FISHER-BOAT.

No reefer struts upon her deck—no boatswain pipes her crew,
Whose rough and tarry jackets are as often brown as blue;
Her sails are torn, her timbers worn, she's but a crazy craft,
Yet luck betides her in the gale, and plenty crowns her draught.
Let but a foe insult the land that holds their cottage home,
And English hearts will spring from out the merry little *Foam:*
What, oh! what, oh! away they go, the moon is high and bright,
God speed the little fisher-boat, and grant a starry night.

No pennant flutters at her mast, no port-holes range her side;
A dusky speck—she takes her place upon the midnight tide,
While gaily sings some happy boy, "A life upon the sea,

With jolly mates, a whiskey can, and trusty nets for me!"
But many an hour of fearful risk she meets upon the wave,
That ships of stout and giant form would scarcely care to brave;
And many a one with trembling hand will trim the beacon light,
And cry, "God speed the fisher-boat upon a stormy night!"

We proudly laud the daring ones that cross the pathless main,
The shining gems and yellow dust of other climes to gain;
We honour those whose blood is with the mingled waters found,
Who fight till death to guard the cliffs whose waters circle round.
'Tis well, but let us not forget the poor and gallant set,
Who toil and watch, when others sleep, to cast the heavy net:
Their perils are not paid by fame—so trim the beacon light;
And cry, "God speed the fisher-boat, and grant a starry night!"

NORAH M'SHANE.

I've left Ballymornach a long way behind me,
To better my fortune I've cross'd the big sea,
But I'm sadly alone, not a creature to mind me,
And, faith! I'm as wretched as wretched can be.
I think of the buttermilk, fresh as a daisy,
The beautiful hills, the emerald plain;
And, oh! don't I oftentimes think myself crazy
About that young black-eyed rogue, Norah M'Shane.

I sigh for the turf-pile, so cheerfully burning,
When barefoot I trudged it, from toiling afar;
When I toss'd in the light the thirteen I'd been earning
And whistled the anthem of "Erin-go-bragh!"
In truth, I believe, I am half broken-hearted;
To my country and love I must get back again;
For I've never been happy at all since I parted
From sweet Ballymornach and Norah M'Shane.

Oh! there's something so dear in the cot I was born in,
Though the walls are but mud, and the roof is but thatch;
How familiar the grunt of the pigs in the morning,
What music in lifting the rusty old latch!
'Tis true I'd no money, but then I'd no sorrow,
My pockets were light, but my heart had no pain;
And if I but live till the sun shines to-morrow,
I'll be off to old Ireland and Norah M'Shane.

SONG OF THE HAYMAKERS.

THE noontide is hot and our foreheads are brown;
Our palms are all shining and hard;
Right close is our work with the wain and the fork,
And but poor is our daily reward.
But there's joy in the sunshine, and mirth in the lark
That swims whistling away overhead;
Our spirits are light though our skins may be dark,
And there's peace with our meal of brown bread.
We dwell in the meadows, we toil on the sward,
Far away from the city's dark gloom;
The more jolly we are, though in rags we may be,
Than the pale faces over the loom.
Then a song and a cheer for the bonnie green stack,
Climbing up to the sun wide and high;
For the pitchers, and rakers, and merry haymakers,
And the beautiful midsummer sky!

Come forth, gentle ladies—come forth, dainty sirs,
And lend us your presence awhile;
Your garments will gather no stain from the burs,
And a freckle won't tarnish your smile.
Our carpet's more soft for your delicate feet
Than the pile of your velveted floor;
And the air of our balm-swath is surely as sweet
As the perfume of Araby's shore.

Come forth, noble masters, come forth to the field,
Where freshness and health may be found;
Where the windows are spread for the butterfly's bed,
And the clover bloom falleth around.
Then a song and a cheer for the bonnie green stack,
Climbing up to the sun wide and high;
For the pitchers, and rakers, and merry haymakers,
And the beautiful midsummer sky!

"Hold fast!" cries the waggoner, loudly and quick,
And then comes the hearty "Gee-wo!"
While the cunning old team-horses manage to pick
A sweet mouthful to munch as they go.
And tawny-faced children come round us to play,
And bravely they scatter the heap;
Till the tiniest one, all outspent with the fun,
Is curl'd up with the sheep-dog, asleep.
Old age sitteth down on the haycock's fair crown,
At the close of our labouring day;
And wishes his life, like the grass at his feet,
May be pure at its "passing away."
Then a song and a cheer for the bonnie green stack,
Climbing up to the sun wide and high;
For the pitchers, and rakers, and merry haymakers,
And the beautiful midsummer sky!

EMILY BRONTË.

THE OLD STOIC.

RICHES I hold in light esteem,
And Love I laugh to scorn;
The lust of fame was but a dream,
That vanished with the morn.

And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me,
Is, "Leave the heart that now I bear,
And give me liberty!"

Yes, as my swift days near their goal,
'Tis all that I implore;
In life and death, a shameless soul,
With courage to endure.

STANZAS.

OFTEN rebuked, yet always back returning
To those first feelings that were born with me,
And leaving busy chase of wealth and learning
For idle dreams of things which cannot be:

To-day, I will not seek the shadowy region;
Its unsustaining vastness waxes drear;
And visions rising legion after legion,
Bring the unreal world too strangely near.

I'll walk, but not in old heroic traces,
And not in paths of high mortality,
And not among the half-distinguished faces,
The clouded forms of long past history.

I'll walk where my own nature would be leading:
It vexes me to choose another guide:
Where the grey flocks in ferny glens are feeding;
Where the wild wind blows on the mountain side.

A DEATH SCENE.

"O DAY! he cannot die
When thou so fair art shining!
O Sun, in such a glorious sky,
So tranquilly reclining;

He cannot leave thee now,
While fresh west winds are blowing,
And all around his youthful brow
Thy cheerful light is glowing!

Edward, awake, awake—
The golden evening gleams
Warm and bright on Arden's lake—
Arouse thee from thy dreams!

Beside thee, on my knee,
My fairest friend, I pray
That thou to cross the eternal sea
Wouldst yet one hour delay:

I hear its billows roar—
I see them foaming high;
But no glimpse of a further shore
Has blest my straining eye.

Believe not what they urge
Of Eden isles beyond;
Turn back, from that tempestuous surge,
To thine own native land.

It is not death, but pain
That struggles in thy breast—
Nay, rally, Edward, rouse again;
I cannot let thee rest!"

One look that sore reproved me
For the woe I could not bear—
One mute look of suffering moved me
To repent my useless prayer:

And, with sudden check, the heaving
Of distraction passed away;
Not a sign of further grieving
Stirred my soul that awful day.

Paled, at length, the sweet sun setting;
Sunk to peace the twilight breeze:
Summer dews fell softly, wetting
Glen, and glade, and silent trees.

Then his eyes began to weary,
Weighed beneath a mortal sleep;
And their orbs grew strangely dreary,
Clouded even as they would weep.

But they wept not, but they changed not,
Never moved and never closed;
Trembled still, and still they ranged not—
Wandered not, nor yet reposed!

So I knew that he was dying—
Stooped, and raised his languid head;
Felt no breath, and heard no sighing,
So I knew that he was dead.

REMEMBRANCE.

Cold in the earth—and the deep snow piled above thee,
Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave!
Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,
Severed at last by Time's all-severing wave?

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover
Over the mountains, on that northern shore,
Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves cover
Thy noble heart for ever, ever more?

Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers,
From those brown hills, have melted into spring:
Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers
After such years of change and suffering!

Sweet Love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee,
While the world's tide is bearing me along;
Other desires and other hopes beset me,
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong!

No later light has lightened up my heaven,
No second morn has ever shone for me;
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.

But when the days of golden dreams had perished,
And even despair was powerless to destroy;
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,
Strengthened, and fed without the aid of joy.

Then did I check the tears of useless passion—
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine:
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine.

And, even yet, I dare not let it languish,
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain;
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I seek the empty world again?

LAST LINES.

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere:
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God, within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity!
Life—that in me has rest,
As I—undying Life—have power in thee!

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts: unutterably vain;
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by thine infinity;
So surely anchored on
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou were left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for Death,
Nor atom that his might could render void:
Thou—THOU art Being and Breath,
And what THOU art may never be destroyed.

LADY WILDE ("SPERANZA").

THE BROTHERS.

A SCENE FROM '98.

——"Oh! give me truths,
For I am weary of the surfaces,
And die of inanition."—EMERSON.

'Tis midnight, falls the lamplight dull and sickly
On a pale and anxious crowd,
Through the court, and round the judges, thronging thickly,
With prayers, they dare not speak aloud.
Two youths, two noble youths, stand prisoners at the bar—
You can see them through the gloom—
In the pride of life and manhood's beauty, there they are
Awaiting their death doom.

All eyes an earnest watch on them are keeping,
Some, sobbing, turn away,
And the strongest men can hardly see for weeping,
So noble and so loved were they.
Their hands are locked together, those young brothers,
As before the judge they stand—
They feel not the deep grief that moves the others,
For they die for Fatherland.

They are pale, but it is not fear that whitens
On each proud, high brow,
For the triumph of the martyr's glory brightens
Around them even now.
They sought to free their land from thrall of stranger;
Was it treason? Let them die;
But their blood will cry to Heaven—the Avenger
Yet will hearken from on high.

Before them, shrinking, cowering, scarcely human,
The base Informer bends,
Who, Judas-like, could sell the blood of true men,
While he clasped their hand as friends.
Ay, could fondle the young children of his victim—
Break bread with his young wife,
At the moment that for gold his perjured dictum
Sold the husband and the father's life.

There is silence in the midnight—eyes are keeping
Troubled watch till forth the jury come;
There is silence in the midnight—eyes are weeping—
Guilty!—is the fatal uttered doom.

For a moment, o'er the brothers' noble faces,
Came a shadow sad to see;
Then, silently, they rose up in their places,
And embraced each other fervently.

Oh! the rudest heart might tremble at such sorrow,
The rudest cheek might blanch at such a scene:
Twice the judge essayed to speak the word — to-morrow—
Twice faltered, as a woman he had been.
To-morrow!—Fain the elder would have spoken,
Prayed for respite, tho' it is not Death he fears;
But, thoughts of home and wife his heart hath broken,
And his words are stopped by tears.

But the youngest—oh, he spoke out bold and clearly:—
"I have no ties of children or of wife;
Let me die—but spare the brother who more dearly
Is loved by me than life."—
Pale martyrs, ye may cease, your days are numbered;
Next noon your sun of life goes down;
One day between the sentence and the scaffold—
One day between the torture and the crown!

A hymn of joy is rising from creation;
Bright the azure of the glorious summer sky,
But human hearts weep sore in lamentation,
For the brothers are led forth to die.

Ay, guard them with your cannon and your lances—
So of old came martyrs to the stake;
Ay, guard them—see the people's flashing glances,
For these noble two are dying for their sake.

Yet none spring forth their bonds to sever;
Ah! methinks, had I been there,
I'd have dared a thousand deaths ere ever
The sword should touch their hair.
It falls!—there is a shriek of lamentation
From the weeping crowd around;
They're stilled—the noblest within the nation—
The noblest heads lie bleeding on the ground.

Years have passed since that fatal scene of dying,
Yet, lifelike to this day,
In their coffins still those severed heads are lying,
Kept by angels from decay.
Oh, they preach to us, those still and pallid features—
Those pale lips still implore us, from their graves,
To strive for our birthright as God's creatures,
Or die, if we can but live as slaves.

DORA GREENWELL.

SONGS OF FAREWELL.

DEATH.

"Leaves and clustered fruits, and flowers eterne,
Eternal to the world, but not to me."—HOOD.

THE Spring will come again, dear friends,
The Swallow o'er the Sea;
The bud will hang upon the bough,
The blossom on the tree;
And many a pleasant sound will rise to greet her on her way,
The voice of bird, and leaf, and stream, and warm winds in their play;
Ah! sweet the airs that round her breathe! and bountiful is she,
She bringeth all the things that fresh, and sweet, and hopeful be;
She scatters promise on the earth with open hand and free,
But not for me, my friends,
But not for me!

Summer will come again, dear friends,
Low murmurs of the Bee
Will rise through the long sunny day
Above the flowery lea;
And deep the dreamy woods will own the slumbrous spell she weaves,
And send a greeting, mixed with sighs, through all their quivering leaves.
Oh, precious are her glowing gifts! and plenteous is she,
She bringeth all the lovely things that bright and fragrant be;
She scatters fulness on the Earth with lavish hand and free,
But not for me, my friends,
But not for me!

Autumn will come again, dear friends,
His spirit-touch shall be
With gold upon the harvest-field,
With crimson on the tree;
He passeth o'er the silent woods, they wither at his breath,
Slow fading in a still decay, a change that is not Death.
Oh! rich and liberal, and wise, and provident is he!
He taketh to his Garner-house the things that ripened be,
He gathereth his store from Earth, and silently—
And he will gather me, my friends,
He will gather me!

MENELLA BUTE SMEDLEY.

A CHARACTER.

So noble that he cannot see
  He stands in aught above the rest,
But does his greatness easily,
  And mounts his scaffold with a jest;

Not vaunting any daily death,
  Because he scorns the thing that dies,
And not in love with any breath
  That might proclaim him grand or wise.

Not much concerned with schemes that show
  The counterchange of weak with strong,
But never passing by a woe,
  Nor sitting still to watch a wrong.

Of all hearts careful save his own;
  Most tender when he suffers most;
Wont, if a foe must be o'erthrown,
  To count, but never grudge the cost.

Sharp insight, severing with a glance
  Greater from less, from substance shade;
Faith, in gross darkness of mischance
  Unable to be much afraid.

Out-looking eyes that seek and scan,
  Ready to love what they behold;
Quick reverence for his brother-man;
  Quick sense where gilding is not gold.

Such impulse in his self-control,
  It seems a voluntary grace,
The careless grandeur of a soul
  That holds no mirror to its face.

True sympathy a light that grows,
  And broadens like the summer morn's;
A hope that trusts before it knows,
  Being out of tune with all the scorns.

On-moving, temperately intent
  On radiant ends by means as bright,
And never cautious, but content
  With all the bitter fruits of right.

Under this shade the tired may lie,
  Worn with the greatness of their way;
Under this shield the brave may die,
  Aware that they have won the day.

For such a leader lifts his times
  Out of the limits of the night,
And, falling grandly, while he climbs,
  Falls with his face toward the height.

THE LITTLE FAIR SOUL.

A LITTLE fair soul that knew no sin,
  Looked over the edge of Paradise,
And saw one striving to come in,
  With fear and tumult in his eyes.

"Oh, brother, is it you?" he cried;
  "Your face is like a breath from home;
Why do you stay so long outside?
  I am athirst for you to come!

"Tell me first how our mother fares,
  And has she wept too much for me?"
"White are her cheeks and white her hairs,
  But not from gentle tears for thee."

"Tell me, where are our sisters gone?"
  "Alas, I left them weary and wan."
"And tell me is the baby grown?"
  "Alas! he is almost a man!

"Cannot you break the gathering days,
  And let the light of death come through,
Ere his feet stumble in the maze
  Crossed safely by so few, so few?

"For like a crowd upon the sea
That darkens till you find no shore,
So was that face of life to me,
Until I sank for evermore.

"And like an army in the snow
My days went by, a treacherous train,
Each smiling as he struck his blow,
Until I lay among them slain."

"Oh, brother, there was a path so clear!"
"There might be, but I never sought."
"Oh, brother, there was a sword so near!"
"There might be, but I never fought!"

"Yet set this needless gloom aside,
For you are come to the gate at last!"
Then in despair that soul replied,
"The gate is fast! the gate is fast!"

"I cannot move this mighty weight,
I cannot find this golden key;
But hosts of heaven around us wait,
And none has ever said 'No' to me.

"Sweet Saint, put by thy palm and scroll,
And come and undo the door for me!"
"Rest thee still, thou little fair soul,
It is not mine to keep the key."

"Kind Angel, strike these doors apart!
The air without is dark and cold."
"Rest thee still, thou little pure heart,
Not for my word will they unfold."

Up all the shining heights he prayed
For that poor Shadow in the cold!
Still came the word, "Not ours to aid;
We cannot make the doors unfold."

But that poor shadow, still outside,
Wrung all the sacred air with pain;
And all the souls went up and cried,
Where never cry was heard in vain.

No eye beheld the pitying Face,
The answer none might understand,
But dimly through the silent space
Was seen the stretching of a Hand.

GEORGE ELIOT.

TWO LOVERS.

Two lovers by a moss-grown spring:
  They leaned soft cheeks together there,
  Mingled the dark and sunny hair,
And heard the wooing thrushes sing.
  O budding time!
  O love's blest prime!

Two wedded from the portal stept:
  The bells made happy carollings,
  The air was soft as fanning wings,
White petals on the pathway slept.
  O pure-eyed bride!
  O tender pride!

Two faces o'er a cradle bent:
  Two hands above the head were locked;
  These pressed each other while they rocked,
Those watched a life that love had sent.
  O solemn hour!
  O hidden power!

Two parents by the evening fire:
The red light fell about their knees
On heads that rose by slow degrees
Like buds upon the lily spire.
O patient life!
O tender strife!

The two still sat together there,
The red light shone about their knees;
But all the heads by slow degrees
Had gone and left that lonely pair.
O voyage fast!
O vanished past!

The red light shone upon the floor,
And made the space between them wide;
They drew their chairs up side by side,
Their pale cheeks joined, and said, "Once more!"
O memories!
O past that is!

ARION.

(HEROD, I. 24.)

ARION, whose melodic soul
Taught the dithyramb to roll
Like forest fires, and sing
Olympian suffering,

Had carried his diviner lore
From Corinth to the sister shore
Where Greece could largelier be,
Branching o'er Italy.

Then, weighted with his glorious name
And bags of gold, aboard he came
'Mid harsh seafaring men
To Corinth bound again.

The sailors eyed the bags and thought:
"The gold is good, the man is nought—
And who shall track the wave
That opens for his grave?"

With brawny arms and cruel eyes
They press around him where he lies
In sleep beside his lyre,
Hearing the Muses quire.

He waked and saw this wolf-faced Death
Breaking the dream that filled his breath
With inspiration strong
Of yet unchanted song.

"Take, take my gold, and let me live!"
He prayed, as kings do when they give
Their all with royal will,
Holding born kingship still.

To rob the living they refuse,
One death or other he must choose,
Either the watery pall
Or wounds and burial.

"My solemn robe then let me don,
Give me high space to stand upon,
That dying I may pour
A song unsung before."

It pleased them well to grant this prayer,
To hear for nought how it might fare
With men who paid their gold
For what a poet sold.

In flowing stole, his eyes aglow
With inward fire, he neared the prow
And took his godlike stand,
The cithara in hand.

The wolfish men all shrank aloof,
And feared this singer might be proof
Against their murderous power,
After his lyric hour.

But he, in liberty of song,
Fearless of death or other wrong,
With full spondaic toll
Poured forth his mighty soul:

Poured forth the strain his dream had taught,
A nome with lofty passion fraught,
Such as makes battles won
On fields of Marathon.

The last long vowels trembled then
As awe within those wolfish men:
They said, with mutual stare,
Some god was present there.

But lo! Arion leaped on high,
Ready, his descant done, to die;
Not asking, "Is it well?"
Like a pierced eagle fell.

"O, MAY I JOIN THE CHOIR INVISIBLE."

"Longum illud tempus, quum non ero, magis me movet, quam hoc exiguum."—CICERO, ad Att., xii. 18.

O, MAY I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues.

So to live is heaven:
To make undying music in the world,
Breathing as beauteous order that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man.
So we inherit that sweet purity
For which we struggled, failed, and agonised
With widening retrospect that bred despair.
Rebellious flesh that would not be subdued,
A vicious parent shaming still its child,
Poor anxious penitence, is quick dissolved;
Its discords, quenched by meeting harmonies,
Die in the large and charitable air.
And all our rarer, better, truer self,
That sobbed religiously in yearning song,
That watched to ease the burthen of the world.

Laboriously tracing what must be,
And what may yet be better—saw within
A worthier image for the sanctuary,
And shaped it forth before the multitude
Divinely human, raising worship so
To higher reverence more mixed with love—
That better self shall live till human Time
Shall fold its eyelids, and the human sky
Be gathered like a scroll within the tomb
Unread for ever.

This is life to come,
Which martyred men have made more glorious
For us who strive to follow. May I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardour, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty—
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible,
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTOR.

INCOMPLETENESS.

NOTHING resting in its own completeness
Can have worth or beauty: but alone
Because it leads and tends to farther sweetness,
Fuller, higher, deeper than its own.

Spring's real glory dwells not in the meaning,
Gracious though it be, of her blue hours;
But is hidden in her tender leaning
To the Summer's richer wealth of flowers.

Dawn is fair, because the mists fade slowly
Into Day, which floods the world with light;
Twilight's mystery is so sweet and holy
Just because it ends in starry night.

Childhood's smiles unconscious graces borrow
From Strife that in a far-off future lies;
And angel glances (veiled now by Life's sorrow)
Draw our hearts to some belovèd eyes.

Life is only bright when it proceedeth
Towards a truer, deeper Life above ;
Human Love is sweetest when it leadeth
To a more divine and perfect Love.

Learn the mystery of Progression duly :
Do not call each glorious change, Decay ;
But know we only hold our treasures truly,
When it seems as if they passed away.

Nor dare to blame God's gifts for incompleteness ;
In that want their beauty lies : they roll
Towards some infinite depth of love and sweetness,
Bearing onward man's reluctant soul.

DINAH MARIA CRAIK.

ROTHESAY BAY.

Fu' yellow lie the corn-rigs
  Far doun the braid hillside;
It is the brawest harstfield
  Alang the shores o' Clyde,—
And I'm a puir harst-lassie
  Wha stands the lee-lang day
Shearing the corn-rigs of Ardbeg
  Aboon sweet Rothesay Bay.

O I had ance a true love,—
  Now, I hae nane ava;
And I had three braw brithers,
  But I hae tint them a';
My father and my mither
  Sleep i' the mools[1] this day,
I sit my lane amang the rigs
  Aboon sweet Rothesay Bay.

[1] Graves.

It's a bonnie bay at morning,
  And bonnier at the noon,
But it's bonniest when the sun draps
  And red comes up the moon :
When the mist creeps o'er the Cumbrays,
  And Arran peaks are grey,
And the great black hills, like sleepin' kings,
  Sit grand roun' Rothesay Bay.

Then a bit sigh stirs my bosom,
  And a saut tear blin's my e'e,—
And I think o' that far Countrie
  Whaur I wad like to be !
But I rise content i' the morning,
  To wark while wark I may,
I' the yellow harst-field of Ardbeg
  Aboon sweet Rothesay Bay.

SEMPER FIDELIS.

"Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted."

THINK you, had we two lost fealty, something would not, as I sit
With this book upon my lap here, come and overshadow it?
Hide with spectral mists the pages, under each familiar leaf
Lurk, and clutch my hand that turns it with the icy clutch of grief?

Think you, were we twain divided, not by distance, time, or aught
That the world calls separation, but we smile at, better taught,
That I should not feel the dropping of each link you did untwine
Clear as if you sat before me with your true eyes fixed on mine?

That I should not, did you crumble as the other false friends do
To the dust of broken idols, know it without sight of you,

By some shadow darkening daylight in the fickle skies of Spring,
By foul fears from household corners crawling over everything?

If that awful gulf were opening which makes two, however near,
Parted more than we were parted, dwelt we in each hemisphere,—
Could I sit here, smiling quiet on this book within my hand,
And while earth was cloven beneath me, feel no shock nor understand?

No, you cannot, could not alter. No, my faith builds safe on yours,
Rock-like; though the winds and waves howl, its foundation still endures:
By a man's will—"See, I hold thee: thou art mine, and mine shall be."
By a woman's patience—"Sooner doubt I my own soul than thee."

So, Heaven mind us! we'll together once again take counsel sweet;
Though this hand of mine drops empty, that blank wall my blank eyes meet:
Life may flow on: men be faithless,—ay, forsooth, and women too!
ONE is true; and as He liveth, I believe in truth—and *you*.

PHILIP MY KING.

Look at me with thy large brown eyes,
Philip my king,
Round whom the enshadowing purple lies
Of babyhood's royal dignities:
Lay on my neck thy tiny hand
With love's invisible sceptre laden;
I am thine Esther to command
Till thou shalt find a queen-handmaiden,
Philip my king.

O the day when thou goest a-wooing,
Philip my king!
When some beautiful lips are suing,
And some gentle heart's bars undoing
Thou dost enter, love-crowned, and there
Sittest love glorified. Rule kindly,
Tenderly, over thy kingdom fair,
For we that love, ah! we love so blindly,
Philip my king.

Up from thy sweet mouth,—up to thy brow,
Philip my king!
The spirit that here lies sleeping now
May rise like a giant and make men bow

As to one heaven-chosen among his peers:
My Saul, than thy brethren taller and fairer,
Let me behold thee in future years;
Yet thy head needeth a circlet rarer,
Philip my king,

—A wreath not of gold, but palm! One day,
Philip my king,
Thou too must tread, as we trod, a way
Thorny and cruel and cold and grey:
Rebels within thee and foes without,
Will snatch at thy crown. But march on, glorious—
Martyr, yet monarch: till angels shout
As thou sit'st at the feet of God victorious,
"Philip the king!"

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

DREAM-LAND.

WHERE sunless rivers weep
Their waves into the deep,
She sleeps a charmèd sleep;
  Awake her not.
Led by a single star,
She came from very far
To seek where shadows are
  Her pleasant lot.

She left the rosy morn,
She left the fields of corn,
For twilight cold and lorn
  And water springs.
Through sleep, as through a veil,
She sees the sky look pale,
And hears the nightingale
  That sadly sings.

Rest, rest, a perfect rest
Shed over brow and breast;
Her face is towards the west,
  The purple land.
She cannot see the grain
Ripening on hill and plain;
She cannot feel the rain
  Upon her hand.

Rest, rest, for evermore
Upon a mossy shore;
Rest, rest at the heart's core
  Till time shall cease:
Sleep that no pain shall wake,
Night that no morn shall break
Till joy shall overtake
  Her perfect peace.

A BIRTHDAY.

My heart is like a singing bird
  Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
  Whose boughs are bent with thick-set fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
  That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these,
  Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a daïs of silk and down;
  Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it with doves and pomegranates,
  And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
  In leaves and silver fleur-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
  Is come, my love is come to me.

CONFLUENTS.

As rivers seek the sea,
Much more deep than they,
So my soul seeks thee,
Far away:
As running rivers moan
On their course alone,
So I moan,
Left alone.

As the delicate rose
To the sun's sweet strength
Doth herself unclose,
Breadth and length:
So spreads my heart to thee,
Unveiled utterly,
I to thee
Utterly.

As morning dew exhales
Sunwards pure and free,
So my spirit fails
After thee:
As dew leaves not a trace
On the green earth's face;
I, no trace
On thy face.

Its goal the river knows,
Dewdrops find a way,
Sunlight cheers the rose
In her day:
Shall I, lone sorrow past,
Find thee at last?
Sorrow past,
Thee at last?

ECHO.

COME to me in the silence of the night;
Come in the speaking silence of a dream;
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright
As sunlight on a stream;
Come back in tears,
O memory, hope, love of vanished years.

O dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,
Whose wakening should have been in Paradise,
Where souls brimful of love abide and meet;
Where thirsting, longing eyes
Watch the slow door
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may give
My very life again though cold in death:
Come back to me in dreams, that I may give
Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:
Speak low, lean low,
As long ago, my love, how long ago!

REST.

O EARTH, lie heavily upon her eyes;
  Seal her sweet eyes weary of watching, Earth;
  Lie close around her; leave no room for mirth
With its harsh laughter, nor for sound of sighs.
She hath no questions, she hath no replies,
  Hushed in and curtained with a blessed dearth
  Of all that irked her from the hour of birth;
With stillness that is almost Paradise.
Darkness more clear than noonday holdeth her,
  Silence more musical than any song;
Even her very heart has ceased to stir:
Until the morning of Eternity
Her rest shall not begin nor end, but be;
  And when she wakes she will not think it long.

LOVE LIES BLEEDING.

Love that is dead and buried, yesterday
  Out of his grave rose up before my face;
  No recognition in his look, no trace
Of memory in his eyes dust-dimmed and grey.
While I, remembering, found no word to say,
  But felt my quickened heart leap in its place;
  Caught afterglow thrown back from long set days,
Caught echoes of all music passed away.
Was this indeed to meet?—I mind me yet,
  In youth we met when hope and love were quick,
    We parted with hope dead, but love alive:
  I mind me how we parted when heart sick,
    Remembering, loving, hopeless, weak to strive:—
Was this to meet? Not so, we have not met.

THE WORLD.

By day she wooes me, soft, exceeding fair:
  But all night as the moon so changeth she;
  Loathsome and foul with hideous leprosy
And subtle serpents gliding in her hair.
By day she wooes me to the outer air,
  Ripe fruits, sweet flowers, and full satiety:
  But through the night a beast she grins at me,
A very monster void of love and prayer.
By day she stands a lie: by night she stands,
  In all the naked horror of the truth,
With pushing horns and clawed and clutching hands.
Is this a friend indeed; that I should sell
  My soul to her, give her my life and youth,
Till my feet, cloven too, take hold on hell?

LATER LIFE.

XXVI.

THIS life is full of numbness and of balk,
  Of haltingness and baffled short-coming,
  Of promise unfulfilled, of everything
That is puffed vanity and empty talk:
Its very bud hangs cankered on the stalk,
  Its very song-bird trails a broken wing,
  Its very Spring is not indeed like Spring,
But sighs like Autumn round an aimless walk.
This Life we live is dead for all its breath;
  Death's self it is set off on pilgrimage,
  Travelling with tottering steps the first short stage:
    The second stage is one mere desert dust
    Where Death sits veiled amid creation's rust:
Unveil thy face, O Death, who art not Death.

JEAN INGELOW.

DIVIDED.

An empty sky, a world of heather,
Purple of foxglove, yellow of broom;
We two among them wading together,
Shaking out honey, treading-perfume.

Crowds of bees are giddy with clover,
Crowds of grasshoppers skip at our feet,
Crowds of larks at their matins hang over,
Thanking the Lord for a life so sweet.

Flusheth the rise with her purple favour,
Gloweth the cleft with her golden ring,
'Twixt the two brown butterflies waver,
Lightly settle, and sleepily swing.

We two walk till the purple dieth
And short dry grass under foot is brown,
But one little streak at a distance lieth,
Green like a ribbon to prank the down.

II.

Over the grass we stepped unto it,
And God He knoweth how blithe we were!
Never a voice to bid us eschew it:
Hey the green ribbon that showed so fair!

Hey the green ribbon! we kneeled beside it,
We parted the grasses dewy and sheen;
Drop over drop there filtered and slided
A tiny bright beck that trickled between.

Tinkle, tinkle, sweetly it sung to us,
Light was our talk as of faëry bells—
Faëry wedding-bells faintly rung to us
Down in their fortunate parallels.

Hand in hand, while the sun peered over,
We lapped the grass on that youngling spring;
Swept back its rushes, smoothed its clover,
And said, 'Let us follow it westering.'

III.

A dappled sky, a world of meadows,
Circling above us the black rooks fly
Forward, backward; lo, their dark shadows
Flit on the blossoming tapestry.

Flit on the beck, for her long grass parteth
As hair from a maid's bright eyes blown back;
And, lo, the sun like a lover darteth
His flattering smile on her wayward track.

Sing on! we sing in the glorious weather,
Till one steps over the tiny strand,
So narrow, in sooth, that still together
On either brink we go hand in hand.

The beck grows wider, the hands must sever,
On either margin, our songs all done,
We move apart, while she singeth ever,
Taking the course of the stooping sun.

He prays, 'Come over'—I may not follow;
I cry, 'Return'—but he cannot come:
We speak, we laugh, but with voices hollow;
Our hands are hanging, our hearts are numb.

IV.

A breathing sigh, a sigh for answer,
A little talking of outward things:
The careless beck is a merry dancer,
Keeping sweet time to the air she sings.

A little pain when the beck grows wider;
'Come to me now,—for her wavelets swell.'
'I may not cross'—and the voice beside her
Faintly reacheth, though heeded well.

No backward path; ah! no returning;
  No second crossing that ripple's flow:
'Come to me now, for the west is burning;
  Come ere it darkens;' 'Ah, no! ah, no!'

Then cries of pain, and arms outreaching—
  The beck grows wider and swift and deep:
Passionate words as of one beseeching—
  The loud beck drowns them; we walk and weep.

V.

A yellow moon in splendour drooping,
  A tired queen with her state oppressed,
Low by rushes and swordgrass stooping,
  Lies she soft on the waves at rest.

The desert heavens have felt her sadness;
  Her earth will weep her some dewy tears;
The wild beck ends her tune of gladness,
  And goeth stilly as soul that fears.

We two walk on in our grassy places
  On either marge of the moonlit flood,
With the moon's own sadness in our faces,
  Where joy is withered, blossom and bud.

VI.

A shady freshness, chafers whirring,
  A little piping of leaf-hid birds;
A flutter of wings, a fitful stirring,
  A cloud to the eastward snowy as curds.

Bare grassy slopes, where kids are tethered
  Round valleys like nests all ferny-lined;
Round hills, with fluttering tree-tops feathered,
  Swell high in their freckled robes behind.

A rose-flush tender, a thrill, a quiver,
  When golden gleams to the tree-tops glide;
A flashing edge for the milk-white river,
  The beck, a river—with still sleek tide.

Broad and white, and polished as silver,
  On she goes under fruit-laden trees;
Sunk in leafage cooeth the culver,
  And 'plaineth of love's disloyalties.

Glitters the dew and shines the river,
  Up comes the lily and dries her bell;
But two are walking apart for ever,
  And wave their hands for a mute farewell.

VII.

A braver swell, a swifter sliding;
  The river hasteth, her banks recede:
Wing-like sails on her bosom gliding
  Bear down the lily and drown the reed.

Stately prows are rising and bowing
  (Shouts of mariners winnow the air),
And level sands for banks endowing
  The tiny green ribbon that showed so fair.

While, O my heart! as white sails shiver,
And crowds are passing, and banks stretch wide,
How hard to follow, with lips that quiver,
That moving speck on the far-off side!

Farther, farther—I see it—know it—
My eyes brim over, it melts away;
Only my heart to my heart shall show it
As I walk desolate day by day.

VIII.

And yet I know past all doubting, truly—
A knowledge greater than grief can dim—
I know, as he loved, he will love me duly—
Yea, better—e'en better than I love him.

And as I walk by the vast calm river,
The awful river so dread to see,
I say, 'Thy breadth and thy depth for ever
Are bridged by his thoughts that cross to me.'

AN ANCIENT CHESS KING.

HAPLY some Rajah first in ages gone
  Amid his languid ladies finger'd thee,
  While a black nightingale, sun-swart as he,
Sang his one wife, love's passionate orison:
Haply thou may'st have pleased old Prester John
  Among his pastures, when full royally
  He sat in tent—grave shepherds at his knee—
While lamps of balsam winked and glimmered on.

What dost thou here? Thy masters are all dead;
  My heart is full of ruth and yearning pain
  At sight of thee, O king that hast a crown
Outlasting theirs, and tells of greatness fled
  Through cloud-hung nights of unabated rain
    And murmur of the dark majestic town.

WORK.

LIKE coral insects multitudinous
The minutes are whereof our life is made.
They build it up as in the deep's blue shade
It grows; it comes to light, and then, and thus
For both there is an end. The populous
Sea-blossoms close, our minutes that have paid
Life's debt of work are spent; the work is laid
Before their feet that shall come after us.
We may not stay to watch if it will speed;
The bard if on some luter's string his song
Live sweetly yet; the hero if his star
Doth shine. Work is its own best earthly meed,
Else have we none more than the sea-born throng
Who wrought these marvellous isles that bloom afar.

ISA CRAIG-KNOX.

THE BALLAD OF THE BRIDES OF QUAIR.

A STILLNESS crept about the house;
At evenfall, in noon-tide glare,
Upon the silent hills looked forth
The many-windowed House of Quair.

The peacock on the terrace screamed;
Browsed on the lawn the timid hare;
The great trees grew i' the avenue,
Calm by the sheltered House of Quair.

The pool was still; around its brim
The alders sickened in the air;
There came no murmur from the streams,
Though nigh flowed Leithen, Tweed, and Quair.

The days hold on their wonted pace,
And men to court and camp repair
Their part to fill, or good or ill,
While women keep the House of Quair.

And one is clad in widow's weeds,
And one is maiden-like and fair,
And day by day they seek the paths
About the lonely fields of Quair.

To see the trout leap in the streams,
The summer clouds reflected there,
The maiden loves in pensive dreams
To hang o'er silver Tweed and Quair.

Within, in pall-black velvet clad,
Sits stately in her oaken chair—
A stately dame of ancient name—
The mother of the House of Quair.

Her daughter broiders by her side,
With heavy drooping golden hair,
And listens to her frequent plaint,—
"Ill fare the Brides that come to Quair."

"For more than one hath lived in pine,
And more than one hath died of care,
And more than one hath sorely sinned,
Left lonely in the House of Quair."

"Alas! and ere thy father died
I had not in his heart a share,
And now—may God forfend her ill—
Thy brother brings his Bride to Quair!"

She came: they kissed her in the hall,
They kissed her on the winding stair,
They led her to her chamber high,
The fairest in the House of Quair.

They bade her from the window look,
And mark the scene how passing fair,
Among whose ways the quiet days
Would linger o'er the House of Quair.

"'Tis fair," she said on looking forth,
"But what although 'twere bleak and bare"—
She looked the love she did not speak,
And broke the ancient curse of Quair.—

"Where'er he dwells, where'er he goes,
His dangers and his toils I share."
What need be said—she was not one
Of the ill-fated Brides of Quair.—

H. E. HAMILTON KING.

BARON GIOVANNI NICOTERA.

SALERMO, 1858.

SALERMO awaits amid the heat
Of August, for the words of doom.—
Nicotera and eighty men
Who followed him are here to meet
Award of justice:—it has come.
Follow, and hear the judgment, then.

Ergastolo—an evil name,
An evil thing, a hell on earth;
Wherein no whisper evermore
Of hope shall enter; nor the shame
Of stripes, and bonds, and brutal mirth,
Be loosed from life, till life is o'er.

The judge and prisoner, man to man,
Are met together;—silent one,
With fiery face that in its prime
Looks from the prison changed and wan;—
While speaks the other, having done
With life, and trembling at the time.

"My time is past: some new time wakes:—
I am an old man, I am weak,
I have not seen a face like yours;
And looking on it, my heart breaks
For such a doom as I must speak:—
I know no heart of man endures

"Such things as are before you now.
I pray you ere it be too late,
To seek some mercy for the sake
Of those that love you, and to bow
Unto the world, and kings and fate:—
You will not bend, but they can break.

"You that are helpless in their hands,
Keep your own heart, but speak some word
Of prayer for pardon and submit
To that strong law which stays and stands
A rock above the waves unstirred,
While you are dashed to death on it,

"In vain, in vain;—and lives of those
That followed you are cast away.
For them, for you, there yet is grace
If you will have it." The tears rose:
But answer made Nicotera,
Standing together face to face,—

"Domenico, I speak to you,
Not as the judge who serveth man,
But as the man who serveth God—
God who shall judge between us two:—
I say, I will not, if I can,
Retrace one step my feet have trod.

"You serve your King, and it is well;
He hath not failed you at your need,
Not yet,—and you have royal grace.
We serve our God—and you can tell
Our wages:—and if this indeed
Were all, you have the better place.

"But we have not been desolate
Of such divinest comfortings
As hitherto have borne us up;
With one inspired Apostolate,
Of trumpet-voice that round us rings,
One sanguine sacramental cup.

"And having heard and drunk, nowise
Can we but triumph, since God's light
Hath opened to us—Italy!
And hath unveiled before our eyes,
Far off, and unapproached, and bright,
His last dread angel, Liberty.

"The unseen, unborn face of one
Even as a mother cherisheth,
Who knoweth she shall live to bear
A living and most lovely son,
And yet must die before his breath
Upon her lips makes soft the air,—

"Though now we suffer for her sake,
Her living face we shall not see;
The throes are come, but not the birth.
For we no more shall writhe and wake,
And on our graves her foot shall be,
When she comes down to reign on earth."

. . . . . .

All day the hammers fast and hard
Have riveted on feet and hands
The weight of irons they shall wear
Through the long dying, and the yard
With fettered pairs is filled, and stands
Nicotera amongst them there.

"For this that I have brought you to,
Children, forgive me ere we part;
A font of fire, a whole life's loss:
And yet I know that none of you
Forgiveth me, but in his heart
Blesseth me rather, for this cross.

"Through every hour of painful breath,
Henceforth our souls must carve their price,
Life's hope is past, life's purpose stays.
Better than life, better than death,
Is this the living sacrifice:
God keep us worthy all our days!

"The earliest martyrs, the unnamed
Saints, the forgotten rank and file
Of Christ's unconquered soldiery,
Under the same fierce suns that flamed
On the same bare and blasted isle,
Suffered in lifelong constancy.

"The same rocks echo the same clank
Of chains, the same taskmaster's stroke,
And grind of stone, and anvil's roar:
Ye go to drink the cup they drank;
And yet they live, their chains are broke,
Their martyrdom has long been o'er.

"God be with you! For me, they say
I go, kept back for such a meed
As man's heart faileth him to see:
Therefore forget me not, but pray
The grace be greater than the need;
What matter, if God go with me!

"No darkness is so deep, but white
Wings of the angels through can pierce;
Nor any chain such heaps lies in
But God's own hand can hold it light;
Nor is there any flame so fierce
But Christ himself can stand therein."

. . . . . .

The sunset comes; the guarded rank
Through thronging thousands of the town,
Gather on window, roof, and door,
With heavy step, and ceaseless clank,
To the dark ship is passing down,
That waits to take them from the shore.

Ah Saints, the bare and bleeding feet!
Ah Christ, the bruised and bleeding hands!
Ah God, the pallid faces there!
One low long sob goes through the street,
One passionate curse God understands,
One bitter agony of prayer.

A dream of liquid colour! lo,
The hills that slope into the sea
Range back from rose to violet
And melting into indigo,
In farthest mountain mystery,
Upon the stainless East are set.

The fishing fleet at anchor-hold
  Leans over, every purple barge,
    In purple shadow on the seas;
—In sweeps of silver outward rolled,
  Till points of pearl upon the marge
    Set sail for the Hesperides.

Midway the Sirens' Islands mark
  The blue and glassy wave that flows
    And ebbs within their cavern-line;
Lying all cool and lovely-dark
  Against the cloudless West that glows
    Through depths of crimson crystalline.

But the black hull is closer moored
  Against the white shore, motionless;
    All round, the opal flood of light,
Beneath the great black shape obscured,
  Quivers intenser;—is not this
    The very gate of Heaven in sight?

Not yet, not yet! Another day.—
  O, faithful hearts, take this for sign,
    That as upon your agony,
With unmoved faces on their way,
  Shine through the sunset the divine
    Lights of Italia's shore and sea,—

Some day, hereafter, ye shall gaze
On them through other eyes than these
Of dry despair;—and happy tears
Suddenly break forth—"Are the days
Ended indeed? The skies and seas
Are passing. Past with all the years."

. . . . . .

The night has fallen suddenly;
A wind comes sighing from the seas;
And they are passed beyond our sight.
And none Nicotera shall see
Henceforth, though he were not with these,
He who is shut from life and light.

For he who was their Chief and First,
Shall suffer chief and first of all.
Dark caverns of captivity
In many an isle they hold; and worst
Of any, rumour can recall,
Is Favignana's out at sea.

They say Tiberius hollowed it,
The year that Christ from Calvary
Looked down, and said "Forgive them, Lord."
It lieth under water, lit
By such faint daylight shadowy
As down four hundred steps is poured;

Down in the heart of naked rock,
  Below the seas that evermore
    Sound through the dank and oozing walls;
The chains are rusted in the lock,
  And on the rotten crusted floor
    The centipede and scorpion crawls.

This legend on the tower above
  Is carved: "*Si entra vivo, e*
    Si esce morto." But Death waits:
And here Nicotera, for love
  Of Italy, through night and day
    Endures alone, and expiates.

. . . . . .

O Master of the mighty hand!
  Who sealest sentence with a kiss,
    So that thy doomsmen's hearts grow light,—
Is the word true? Shall the faith stand?
  Is the work worth such woe as this?
    Can the day recompense the night?

Thou sendeth forth, and dost not spare,
  Thy best to meet the tyrant's worst;
    Thou sowest lives for Seed of Life.
O starry-stern through all despair,
  Straight on thy course as at the first,
    Where is *thine* anguish in this strife?

The live pain burneth like a lamp
  Within thy dark eyes passionate,
    It burneth to the soul away:
It saith, "To me the dungeon-damp,
  The last farewell, the felon's fate,
    Were nothing:—I know more, and stay

"Facing the foreseen doom ye know,
  Through flesh and soul's extremity,
    Fight on, and keep your hearts alive!
I have gone through where ye must go,
  I have seen past the agony,
    I behold God in Heaven, and strive.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

CIRCE.

THE sun drops luridly into the west;
Darkness has raised her arms to draw him down
Before the time, not waiting as of wont
Till he has come to her behind the sea;
And the smooth waves grow sullen in the gloom
And wear their threatening purple; more and more
The plain of waters sways and seems to rise
Convexly from its level of the shores;
And low dull thunder rolls along the beach:
There will be storm at last, storm, glorious storm.

O welcome, welcome, though it rend my bowers,
Scattering my blossomed roses like the dust,
Splitting the shrieking branches, tossing down
My riotous vines with their young half-tinged grapes
Like small round amethysts or beryls strung
Tumultuously in clusters, though it sate
Its ravenous spite among my goodliest pines
Standing there round and still against the sky

That makes blue lakes between their sombre tufts,
Or harry from my silvery olive slopes
Some hoary king whose gnarled fantastic limbs
Wear crooked armour of a thousand years;
Though it will hurl high on my flowery shores
The hostile wave that rives at the poor sward
And drags it down the slants, that swirls its foam
Over my terraces, shakes their firm blocks
Of great bright marbles into tumbled heaps,
And makes my pleached and mossy labyrinths,
Where the small odorous blossoms grow like stars
Strewn in the milky way, a briny marsh.
What matter? let it come and bring me change,
Breaking the sickly sweet monotony.

I am too weary of this long bright calm;
Always the same blue sky, always the sea
The same blue perfect likeness of the sky,
One rose to match the other that has waned,
To-morrow's dawn the twin of yesterday's;
And every night the ceaseless cricket's chirp
The same long joy, and the late strain of birds
Repeats their strain of all the even month;
And changelessly the petty plashing surfs
Bubble their chiming burden round the stones;
Dusk after dusk brings the same languid trance
Upon the shadowy hills, and in the fields,
The waves of fireflies come and go the same,
Making the very flash of light and stir
Vex one like dronings of the spinning-wheel.

Give me some change. Must life be only sweet,
All honey-pap as babes would have their food?
And, if my heart must always be adrowse
In a hush of stagnant sunshine, give me then
Something outside me stirring; let the storm
Break up the sluggish beauty, let it fall
Beaten below the feet of passionate winds,
And then to-morrow waken jubilant
In a new birth: let me see subtle joy
Of anguish and of hopes, of change and growth.

What fate is mine who, far apart from pains
And fears and turmoils of the cross-grained world,
Dwell, like a lonely god, in a charmed isle
Where I am first and only, and, like one
Who should love poisonous savours more than mead,
Long for a tempest on me and grow sick
Of resting, and divine free carelessness!
Oh me, I am a woman, not a god;
Yea, those who tend me even are more than I,
My nymphs who have the souls of flowers and birds
Singing and blossoming immortally.

Ah me! these love a day and laugh again,
And loving, laughing, find a full content;
But I know nought of peace, and have not loved.

Where is my love? Does some one cry for me,
Not knowing whom he calls? does his soul cry
For mine to grow beside it, grow in it?

Does he beseech the gods to give him me,
The unknown rare woman by whose side
No other woman, thrice as beautiful,
Should once seem fair to him; to whose voice heard
In any common tones no sweeter sound
Of love made melody on silver lutes,
Or singing like Apollo's when the gods
Grow pale with happy listening, might be peered
For making music to him; whom once found
There will be no more seeking anything?

Oh love, oh love, oh love, art not yet come
Out of the waiting shadows into life?
Art not yet come after so many years
That I have longed for thee? Come! I am here.

Not yet. For surely I should feel a sound
Of his far answering, if now in the world
He sought me who will seek me—Oh ye gods
Will he not seek me? Is it all a dream?
Will there be never, never such a man?
Will there be only these, these bestial things
Who wallow in my styes, or mop or mow
Among the trees, or munch in pens and byres,
Or snarl and filch behind their wattled coops;
These things that had believed that they were men?

Nay, but he *will* come. Why am I so fair,
And marvellously minded, and with sight
Which flashes suddenly on hidden things,

As the gods see who do not need to look?
Why wear I in my eyes that stronger power
Than basilisks, whose gaze can only kill,
To draw men's souls to me to live or die
As I would have them? why am I given pride
Which yet longs to be broken, and this scorn
Cruel and vengeful for the lesser men
Who meet the smiles I waste for lack of him,
And grow too glad? why am I who I am,
But for the sake of him whom fate will send
One day to be my master utterly,
That he should take me, the desire of all,
Whom only he in all the world could bow to him?
Oh sunlike glory of pale glittering hairs,
Bright as the filmy wires my weavers take
To make me golden gauzes; oh deep eyes,
Darker and softer than the bluest dusk
Of August violets, darker and deep
Like crystal fathomless lakes in summer noons;
Oh sad sweet longing smile; oh lips that tempt
My very self to kisses; oh round cheeks,
Tenderly radiant with the even flush
Of pale smoothed coral; perfect lovely face
Answering my gaze from out this fleckless pool;
Wonder of glossy shoulders, chiselled limbs;
Should I be so your lover as I am,
Drinking an exquisite joy to watch you thus
In all a hundred changes through the day,
But that I love you for him till he comes,
But that my beauty means his loving it?

Oh, look! a speck on this side of the sun,
Coming—yes, coming with the rising wind
That frays the darkening cloud-wrack on the verge
And in a little while will leap abroad,
Spattering the skies with rushing blacknesses,
Dashing the hissing mountainous waves at the stars.
'Twill drive me that black speck a shuddering hulk
Caught in the buffeting waves, dashed impotent
From ridge to ridge, will drive it in the night
With that dull jarring crash upon the beach,
And the cries for help, and the cries of fear and hope.
And then to-morrow they will thoughtfully,
With grave low voices, count their perils up,
And thank the gods for having let them live,
And tell of wives and mothers in their homes,
And children, who would have such loss in them
That they must weep, and may be I weep too,
Of fancy of the weepings had they died.
And the next morrow they will feel their ease
And sigh with sleek content, or laugh elate,
Tasting delights of rest and revelling,
Music and perfumes, joyance for the eyes
Of rosy faces and luxurious pomps,
The savour of the banquet and the glow
And fragrance of the wine cup; and they'll talk
How good it is to house in palaces
Out of the storms and struggles, and what luck
Strewed their good ship on our accessless coast.
Then the next day the beast in them will wake,
And one will strike and bicker, and one swell

With puffed up greatness, and one gibe and strut
In apish pranks, and one will line his sleeve
With pilfered booties, and one snatch the gems
Out of the carven goblets as they pass,
One will grow mad with fever of the wine,
And one will sluggishly besot himself,
And one be lewd, and one be gluttonous;
And I shall sickly look, and loathe them all.

Oh my rare cup! my pure and crystal cup,
With not one speck of colour to make false
The passing lights, or flaw to make them swerve!
My cup of Truth! How the lost fools will laugh
And thank me for my boon, as if I gave
Some momentary flash of the god's joy,
To drink where I have drunk and touch the touch,
Of my lips with their own! Ay, let them touch.

Too cruel am I? And the silly beasts,
Crowding around me when I pass their way,
Glower on me and, although they love me still,
(With their poor sorts of love such as they could,)
Call wrath and vengeance to their humid eyes
To scare me into mercy, or creep near
With piteous fawnings, supplicating bleats.
Too cruel? Did I choose them what they are?
Or change them from themselves by poisonous
charms?
But any draught, pure water, natural wine,
Out of my cup, revealed them to themselves

And to each other? Change? there was no change;
Only disguise gone from them unawares:
And had there been one right true man of them
He would have drunk the draught as I had drunk,
And stood unchanged, and looked me in the eyes,
Abashing me before him. But these things——
Why, which of them has even shown the kind
Of some one nobler beast? Pah, yapping wolves
And pitiless stealthy wild-cats, curs and apes
And gorging swine and stinking venomous snakes
All false and ravenous and sensual brutes
That shame the earth that bore them, these they are.

Lo! lo! the shivering blueness darting forth
On half the heavens, and the forked thin fire
Strikes to the seas: and hark, the sudden voice
That rushes through the trees before the storm,
And shuddering the branches. Yet the sky
Is blue against them still, and early stars
Glimmer above the pine-tops; and the air
Clings faint and motionless around me here.

Another burst of flame—and the black speck
Shows in the glare, lashed onwards. It were well
I bade make ready for our guests to-night.

IN A DAY.

EVENING.

SCENE II. *The banquet hall lighted up. Soft music playing without. A bed placed in an alcove among flowers.*

[*Enter* MYRON, OLYMNIOS, RUFUS, LYSIS, *and others.*]

Myr. Move me that jasmine further from the bed:
The perfume's sweetness coming faint through air.
That's well. And shut the nearest casement close:
The breeze is almost chill. Throw that one wide:
Let waning stars peep at their mimics here.
Now, Rufus, art thou ready?
Ruf. 'Tis art thou?
Myr. Give me the cup, good Lysis. Pure wine first.
I drink to the Good Genius [*drinks*]—whom, perchance,
I shall know presently by some nearer name.
Now, Lysis, that blent wine whose name is Sleep.
[*Drinks.*]
[*To Rufus*] So, thou hast seen me drink, and knowest what draught,
Who saw'st it mixed; no need methinks to watch.
Go, prithee, try again my vintage wine:
I doubt thou wilt not ask to taste *this* brew.

Ruf. No, faith! my thirst can wait a wholesomer tap.
I'm sorry for thee too.
Myr. Well, go, my man;
Thou canst come by-and-by and see 'twas sure.
[*Exeunt all but Myron, Olymnios, and Lysis.*
Now quick, boy; fetch Klydone [*Exit Lysis*]. 'Tis most strange
How death, that is of all we know most sure,
Of all we know seems most impossible.
I shall not live an hour; my mind grants that,
But grants it as a stage of argument,
Gives it but such belief as when, being told
'So many fathomless miles to reach that star?'
We learn the count unquestioning it for true,
But cannot shape conception of its reach.
I cannot, quick life still within my veins,
I cannot feel a faith that, presently,
My cold oblivious body shall lie there,
Void of the soul, an ended nothingness.
Olymn. Thou art too young, and death unnatural.
Myr. Klydone thinks all death unnatural.
Olymn. If nature stood for perfectness, it were.
And therein is the better after-hope:
For perfectness must be, since we conceive it,
And, not being here, 'tis in some second life.
Myr. I'll think my soul shall, like the sunward swallows,
Having known but summer here, renew it there.
Klydone comes not.
Olymn. That's for want of wings.
Myr. I would she had them, to flee hence and rest;

'Tis a wild long journey. Ah, poor child, poor child!
May the gods send her happy.
Olymn. If they will
Pray rather they may send her as is best.
Myr. Let her not brood upon my death too much.
And most of all persuade her from remorse;
Tell her 'twas destined, had she never spoken;
Hush her from her own blame till, by-and-by,
It takes the strangeness of unworded thoughts
That fade like bodily ghosts beyond our ken.
Olymn. No, Myron. Self-blame's a shrewd counsellor;
I will not help Klydone from that good.
Myr. She is such a woman as some griefs could kill.
Olymn. Better to die by an ennobling grief
Than to live cheerful in too low content.
Myr. But spare her; if it be but for my sake.
Olymn. Whom dost thou ask? I spare not nor chastise;
That's God's to do, who makes our self his means:
Her sorrowing or her comfort lie in him.

Enter LYSIS.

Lys. Klydone, sir, Klydone—[*stops*].
Myr. Comes she not?
Tell her to make more speed, for I grow heavy.
Lys. She comes; she bade them carry her; she's half dead.
Myr. I am awake, I think. Say it again,
Half dead?
Lys. She took the poison at due time,
She said 'twas at due time by thine own count.

She said thou shouldst have called her in an hour
And she was ready then, but 'twas too long,
More than an hour, and as she must go first,
That did but mean to follow thee afterwards.
Olymn. Well, 'tis her right.
Myr. Is it a message, boy?
Lys. She said it by gasps; then bade me, if she died,
Tell it thee for her and thou'dst know, and pardon.
She is coming.
Myr. She go first! Klydone die!
Olymnios, hast thou heard?
Olymn. I blame her not;
Nor weep her going with thee. 'Tis the best.
Myr. I would have had her live: she hated death.
But we go hand and hand, husband and wife.
Lysis, go bid them hasten, lest she sleep,
Or I, past waking, ere she come to me.

Enter SERVANTS *carrying* KLYDONE *on a couch.*

A Servant. 'Tis over. She still breathed a minute since;
But now 'tis over.
2nd Servant. 'Twas but just 'Too soon!'
As if she sighed in sleep; then only breathed,
And now 'tis over.
Myr. Oh how fair she lies!
She should have kept that smile to look on me.
Sweet, canst thou see me still? How fair she is!
Smile on Klydone, death has wedded us.

Wife, wilt thou love me there, whither we go?

[*Exit Olymnios.*

Lys. Master, she stirred.

Myr. 'Twas but my breath, my boy,
That moved that straying gossamer of her hair.
[*To the servants.*] Come, lift her gently, lay her on the bed.
So.

Olymn. [*without*] Both! oh, both!

A Servant. Hark! 'Twas a fall. Go see.

[*Exeunt some servants.*

Myr. Where is Olymnios?

Re-enter a SERVANT.

What's the noise we heard?

Serv. Olymnios, master.

Myr. Yes?

Serv. He died, and fell.

Myr. When sorrow swells those iron-pent hearts they break.
Go, all of you. Keep stillness, wake me not.
I have room beside thee, love. [*Lies down on the bed.*
Go now, my friends.
Lysis; not thou. Sit where I do not see thee,
Send hence the music, and thou, sing me asleep.
Is it moonlight yet?

Lys. Yes.

Myr. Throw those curtains back,
Put out those lights. Now sing until I sleep.

[*Exeunt servants.*

No dirges, boy; that song Klydone loved,
Philomel and the aloe flower, sing that.

Lys. [*sings*]

Joy that's half too keen, and true,
Makes us tears.
Oh! the sweetness of the tears!
If such joy at hand appears,
Snatch it, give thine all for it:
Joy that is so exquisite,
Lost, comes not new.
(One blossom for a hundred years.)

Grief that's fond, and dies not soon,
Makes delight.
Oh! the pain of the delight!
If thy grief be Love's aright,
Tend it close and let it grow:
Grief so tender not to know
Loses Love's boon.
(Sweet Philomel sings all the night.)

Myr. [*drowsily*] Fair dreams, Klydone. Waken me at dawn. [*Sleeps.*

(*The End.*)

ENGLISH STORNELLI.

THE FLOWING TIDE.

THE slow green wave comes curling from the bay
  And leaps in spray along the sunny marge,
And steals a little more and more away,
  And drowns the dulse, and lifts the stranded barge.
Leave me, strong tide, my smooth and yellow shore;
But the clear waters deepen more and more:
  Leave me my pathway of the sands, strong tide;
  Yet are the waves more fair than all they hide.

THE FLOWERS TO COME.

THE drift is in the hollow of the hill,
  Yet primrose leaves uncurl beneath the hedge;
Frosts pierce the dawn, and the north wind blows chill,
  Yet snowdrop spikelets rim the garden edge.
Dear plants that will make bud in coming spring,
Ye were not for one only blossoming:
  More than one blossoming for all fair flowers;
  And God keeps mine till spring is somewhere ours.

VIOLET FANE.

REST.

In green old gardens, hidden away
From sight of revel and sound of strife,
Where the bird may sing out his soul ere he dies,
Nor fears for the night, so he lives his day;
Where the high red walls, which are growing grey
With their lichen and moss embroideries,
Seem sadly and sternly to shut out Life,
Because it is often as sad as they;

Where even the bee has time to glide
(Gathering gaily his honeyed store)
Right to the heart of the old-world flowers,—
China-asters and purple stocks,
Dahlias and tall red hollyhocks,
Laburnums raining their golden showers,
Columbines prim of the folded core,
And lupins, and larkspur, and 'London pride';—

Where the heron is waiting amongst the reeds,
  Grown tame in the silence that reigns around,
    Broken only, but now and then,
By shy woodpecker or noisy jay,
By the far-off watch-dog's muffled bay;
    But where never the purposeless laughter of men,
  Or the seething city's murmurous sound
Will float up under the river-weeds.

Here may I live what life I please,
  Married and buried out of sight,—
    Married to Pleasure, and buried to Pain,—
Hidden away amongst scenes like these,
Under the fans of the chestnut trees;
    Living my child-life over again,
  With a fuller hope of a fuller delight,
Blithe as the birds and wise as the bees.

In green old gardens, hidden away
  From sight of revel and sound of strife,—
    Here have I leisure to breathe and move,
And to do my work in a nobler way;
To sing my songs, and to say my say;
    To dream my dreams, and to love my love;
  To hold my faith, and to live my life,
Making the most of its shadowy day.

FORBIDDEN LOVE.

Oh, love! thou that shelt'rest some
'Neath thy wings, so white and warm,
Wherefore on a bat-like wing
All disguisèd didst thou come
In so terrible a form?
As a dark forbidden thing,
As a demon of the air—
As a sorrow and a sin,
Wherefore cam'st thou thus to me,
As a tempter and a snare?
When the heart that beats within
This, my bosom, warm'd to thee,
Was it from a love of sinning,—
From a fatal love of wrong,
From a wish to shun the light?
Nay! I swear at the beginning
Hadst thou sung an angel's song,—
Had this wrong thing been the right,
Thou hadst seem'd as worth the winning,
And with will as firm and strong
I had lov'd with all my might.

SARAH WILLIAMS ("*SADIE*").

SONG OF THE WATER-NIXIES.

By the ripple, ripple of the shallow sea,
By the rocky sea,
By the hollow sea,
We have built a giant windmill, with its long arms free,
And it grinds, that we
May not hungry be.
With a rumble and a roar, sounding all along the shore,
We should vanish and should perish if our wheel were heard no more.

Little hopes of fisher-maidens in the far-off town,
In our wheel go down,
Evermore go down,
For the fisher lads that hold them in the deep sea drown;
By our grinding drown,
For our pleasures drown.
Rend the garment from the soul; let it go, we care not where;
What do mortals want with spirit? 'Tis the bodies that are fair.

Out beyond the green horizon lurks the vengeful day,
Lurks the fateful day,
Lurks the hateful day,
When the winds shall cease to help us in our shark-like play,
When our calm cold sway
Shall have passed away,
When the wreckers and the wrecked both at peace shall be,—
When the threat shall be fulfilled, and there be no more sea.

GROWTH.

I.

A LONELY rock uprose above the sea,
The coral insects fretting at its base;
And no man came unto its loneliness,
The very storm-birds shunned its evil case:
Only the ocean beat upon its breast,
Only the ocean gave it close embrace.

II.

An island was upheaved towards the skies,
A central fire within its heart had burst;
The rock became a mountain, stern and strong,
Only the desolation showed at first;
A stray bird dropped a seed that fructified,
No longer reigned the barrenness accursed.

III.

A little world stood out among the seas,
With singing brooks and many a fragrant wood,
Where lovers heard again their story sweet,
And truth grew fair, more fully understood.
The tender flowers o'ergrew the chasms deep,
And God looked down, and saw that it was good.

ISA BLAGDEN.

SORROW.

If trampled grass gives perfume; if the bowl
Must be well broken ere the wine can flow;
From the abysses of this storm-tossed soul,
From this my destiny's last mortal blow,
From sobs, and sighs, and agonies of tears,
From tortured life, and happiness forborne,
The utter ruin of my youth's lost years,
And from the bitter present's strife forlorn,
The future's terror and the past's despair;
And from this crushed and grief-wrung heart I dare
To call on thee, O God! Let others bring
Their love, obedience, faith, as offering:
I lay my sorrows prostrate at thy feet,
Avenging God! to Thee bruised flowers are sweet.

ENDURANCE.

WILD heart, be still! From yon lone mount, a star
Looks singly forth on the dark world. Art thou
Less brave? To thee thy fears and sorrows are
As night to yon bright orb; yet is its brow
Radiant and calm, as when amid the joy
Of the young earth its light flashed forth from God!
Can summer suns, or gentle moons alloy
The immemorial woe to which art vowed,
O cypress-tree? Yet dost thou sternly bear
Thy mournful doom, and with a brave despair
Droop'st not, albeit no smiles of vernal spring
To thy funereal crown new light can bring.
Lo! these bear up 'gainst Fate a steadfast war;
Am I less noble than the tree or star?

EMILY PFEIFFER.

"PEACE TO THE ODALISQUE."

I.

PEACE to the odalisque, the facile slave,
Whose unrespective love rewards the brave,
Or cherishes the coward; she who yields
Her lord the fief of waste, uncultured fields
To fester in non-using; she whose hour
Is measured by her beauty's transient flower;
Who lives in man, as he in God, and dies
His parasite, who shuts her from the skies.
Graceful ephemera! Fair morning dream
Of the young world! In vain would women's hearts,
In love with sacrifice, withstand the stream
Of human progress; other spheres, new parts
Await them. God be with them in their quest—
Our brave, sad working-women of the West.

II.

PEACE to the odalisque, whose morning glory
Is vanishing, to live alone in story;
Firm in her place, a dull-robed figure stands,
With wistful eyes, and earnest grappling hands:
The working-woman, she whose soul and brain—
Her tardy right—are bought with honest pain.
Oh woman! sacrifice may still be thine—
More fruitful than the souls ye did resign
To sated masters; from your lives, so real,
Will shape itself a pure and high ideal,
That ye will seek with sad, wide-open eyes,
Till, finding nowhere, baffled love shall rise
To higher planes, where passion may look pale,
But charity's white light shall never fail.

EVOLUTION.

HUNGER that strivest in the restless arms
  Of the sea-flower, that drivest rooted things
  To break their moorings, that unfoldest wings
In creatures to be rapt above thy harms;
Hunger, of whom the hungry-seeming waves
  Were the first ministers, till, free to range,
  Thou mad'st the Universe thy park and grange,
What is it thine insatiate heart still craves?

Sacred disquietude, divine unrest!
  Maker of all that breathes the breath of life,
No unthrift greed spurs thine unflagging zest,
  No lust self-slaying hounds thee to the strife;
Thou art the Unknown God on whom we wait:
Thy path the course of our unfolded fate.

TO NATURE.

DREAD force, in whom of old we loved to see
A nursing mother, clothing with her life
The seeds of Love divine,—with what sore strife
We hold or yield our thoughts of Love and thee!
Thou art not 'calm,' but restless as the ocean,
Filling with aimless toil the endless years—
Stumbling on thought and throwing off the spheres,
Churning the Universe with mindless motion.

Dull fount of joy, unhallowed source of tears,
Cold motor of our fervid faith and song,
Dead, but engendering life, love, pangs, and fears,
Thou crownedst thy wild work with foulest wrong
When first thou lightedst on a seeming goal
And darkly blundered on man's suffering soul.

WHEN THE BROW OF JUNE.

When the brow of June is crowned by the rose,
And the air is fain and faint with her breath,
Then the Earth hath rest from her long birth-throes;—

The Earth hath rest and forgetteth her woes
As she watcheth the cradle of Love and Death,
When the brow of June is crowned by the rose.

O Love and Death who are counted for foes,
She sees you twins of one mind and faith—
The Earth at rest from her long birth-throes.

You are twins to the mother who sees and knows;
(Let them strive and thrive together, she saith),—
When the brow of June is crowned by the rose,

They strive, and Love his brother outgrows,
But for strength and beauty he travaileth
On the Earth at rest from her long birth-throes.

And still when his passionate heart o'erflows
Death winds about him a bridal wreath,—
As the brow of June is crowned by the rose!

So the bands of Death true lovers enclose,
For Love and Death are as Sword and Sheath,
When the Earth hath rest from her long birth-throes.

They are Sword and Sheath, they are Life and its Shows
Which lovers have grace to see beneath,
When the brow of June is crowned by the rose
And the Earth hath rest from her long birth-throes.

A SONG OF WINTER.

BARBED blossom of the guarded gorse,
I love thee where I see thee shine:
Thou sweetener of our common-ways,
And brightener of our wintry days.

Flower of the gorse, the rose is dead,
Thou art undying, O be mine!
Be mine with all thy thorns, and prest
Close on a heart that asks not rest.

I pluck thee and thy stigma set
Upon my breast and on my brow,
Blow, buds, and plenish so my wreath
That none may know the wounds beneath.

O crown of thorn that seemest of gold,
No festal coronal art thou;
Thy honeyed blossoms are but hives
That guard the growth of wingëd lives.

I saw thee in the time of flowers
As sunshine spilled upon the land,
Or burning bushes all ablaze
With sacred fire; but went my ways,

I went my ways, and as I went
  Plucked kindlier blooms on either hand;
Now of those blooms so passing sweet
None lives to stay my passing feet.

And still thy lamp upon the hill
  Feeds on the autumn's dying sigh,
And from thy midst comes murmuring
A music sweeter than in spring.

Barbed blossoms of the guarded gorse,
  Be mine to wear until I die,
And mine the wounds of love which still
Bear witness to his human will.

FREDERIKA R. MACDONALD.

PRAYER.

Now, whilst the solemn hand of night has laid
A hush upon the tumult of the street,
And colours blend, and forms begin to fade,
Leaving the unity of life complete,
I stand environed by the lime-trees' shade,
Whose boughs are tremulous with blossoms sweet,
And, like the murmur of a restless sea,
The voice of the great city floats to me.

I will not fret me that angelic Peace
Folds only in her wings the starry sky;
Nor blame the restful night, who brings release
To much hard toil, to many a mourner's sigh,
Because she does not bid all labour cease,
Nor lay her kiss on every wakeful eye,
I will not dare to criticise God's ways,
But raise me to their heights by prayer and praise.

At least to-night, for the still Summer air,
Infiltrate with the breath of many a star,
Hangs rapt as in an ecstasy of prayer,
All sense of pain were powerless to mar,

And merest stones, and homes of beauty bare,
Stand touched by radiance flowing from afar,
    Whilst the large voice of Nature seems to say,
    In tones like organ-throbbing, "Let us pray."

I would be brave to harmonise my soul
Unto this music; to crush out the heat
Of partial life that has me in control,
And blends the stroke of wings with trudge of feet;
To give awhile this fragment to the Whole,
That so it may be cleansed of dust and heat,
    And contemplating the eternal cause,
    Master the hidden beauty of His Laws.

I will not throw me prostrate on my knee,
Nor shut out with my hands the heaven's face;
Nor school to whine or whimper abjectly,
The voice which is man's special gift of grace;
I will not dwarf the spirit God gave free,
Nor dare my mental statue to debase;
    Rather I'd raise me to my fullest height,
    And strain with eager eyes towards the Home
        of Light.

Wide—let me fling the closëd portals wide;
And fearless thrust me out beyond the vail
That with its wrappings would my spirit hide,
And cloak my being in a twilight pale;
And let me dash the mask of self aside,
And dare the barriers of sense to scale,

Raising the burden of my finite share
Unto the Infinite, on wings of prayer.

Because I fully claim to take my share
In human suffering and toil and smart;
Because there is no weight of human care
From which I choose to hold myself apart;
No human hand to touch I would forbear;
No human frailty shut out from my heart;
Because the hardship of the fight is known,
Because this suffering manhood is mine own.

I can afford to quench each bitter cry,
To be quite generous, and rest from pain;
And as the rapture wings my soul on high,
To have no thought of solace or of gain,
To trouble heaven with no suppliant's sigh,
But lose me in the universal strain.
Seeking his presence not to beg, but give
My tribute unto him thro' whom I live.

For prayer is not some preternatural charm
Unto the general scheme of order strange;
No spell to stay the compensating arm,
Nor the straight course of destiny to change;
Prayer is the soul's ascension beyond harm,
Where it may gain a universal range;
And having tasted union with its Source,
May flow, all struck with splendour, on its course.

NEW YEAR'S EVE. MIDNIGHT.

DEAD. The dead year is lying at my feet,
In this strange hour the past and future meet;
There is no present; no land in the vast sea;
Appalled, I stand here in Eternity.

Darkness upon me. On my soul it weighs;
The gloom that has crushed out the life of days
That once knew light, has crept into my heart;
I have not strength to bid it thence depart.

Oh, what is Time? and what is Life, the fire
That thrills my pulses with its large desire?
Since at each step I rend a fragment of my soul,
And growth means dying, whither is the goal?

The old, old question! yet I do not shrink
From bitter truths; I do not fear to drink
Even to the dregs the cup that tears may fill;
I'd know God's truth, though it were human ill;

I have cast down the idols in my mind
Which sought to comfort me for being blind;
I need no pleasant lie to cheat the night,
I need God's Truth, that I may walk aright.

That, and that only! with unflinching eyes
I would tear through the secret of the skies;
Smile on, ye stars; in me there is a might
Which dares to scale your large empyreal height.

Yet—yet—how shall it be? Time sweeps me on,
And what one day I hold, the next is gone;
The very Heavens are changed! the face they wore,
A moment back, is lost to come no more.

My soul along the restless current drifts,
And to its sight the source of radiance shifts;
Wildly I strive some gleam of truth to save,
And cry, "God help me!" battling with the wave.

God help me? Well I know the prayer is vain,
Altho' it rush up to my lips again;
I know His help was given with the Breath
That leads me thus to struggle against death.

No further help. No help beyond the soul,
The fragment of Himself I hold in my control;
From heaven, no stronger aid to lead me through
the fight:
In Heaven, no higher aim to bind me to the Right.

Thus stand I on the brink of this new year,
Darkness upon me—not the work of fear.
Powerless I know to check the river's sweep,
Powerful alone my own soul's truth to keep.

ALICE MEYNELL.

SONG.

As the inhastening tide doth roll,
Dear and desired, upon the whole
Long shining strand, and floods the caves,
Your love comes filling with happy waves
The open sea-shore of my soul.

But inland from the seaward spaces,
None knows, not even you, the places
Brimmed, at your coming, out of sight,
—The little solitudes of delight
This tide constrains in dim embraces.

You see the happy shore, wave-rimmed,
But know not of the quiet dimmed
Rivers your coming floods and fills,
The little pools 'mid happier hills,
My silent rivulets, over-brimmed.

What, I have secrets from you? Yes.
But O my Sea, your love doth press
And reach in further than you know,
And fill all these; and when you go,
There's loneliness in loneliness.

THOUGHTS IN SEPARATION.

We never meet; yet we meet day by day
Upon those hills of life, dim and immense,
The good we love, and sleep, our innocence.
O hills of life, high hills! and, higher than they,

Our guardian spirits meet at prayer and play.
Beyond pain, joy, and hope, and long suspense,
Above the summits of our souls, far hence,
An angel meets an angel on the way.

Beyond all good I ever believed of thee
Or thou of me, these always love and live.
And, though I fail of thy ideal of me,

My angel falls not short. They greet each other;
Who knows, they may exchange the kiss we give,
Thou to thy crucifix, I to my mother.

RENOUNCEMENT.

I MUST not think of thee; and, tired yet strong,
I shun the love that lurks in all delight—
The love of thee—and in the blue Heaven's height,
And in the dearest passage of a song.
Oh just beyond the sweetest thoughts that throng
This breast, the thought of thee waits hidden yet bright;
But it must never, never come in sight;
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.

But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,
Must doff my will as raiment laid away,—
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

THE MODERN POET:

A SONG OF DERIVATIONS.

I COME from nothing: but from where
Come the undying thoughts I bear?
Down through long links of death and birth
From the past poets of the earth.
My immortality is there.

I am like the blossom of an hour;
But long long vanished sun and shower
Awoke my breath in the young world's air.
I track the past back everywhere,
Through flower and seed, and seed and flower.

Or I am like a stream that flows
Full of the cold springs that arose
In morning lands, in distant hills;
And down the plain my channel fills
With melting of forgotten snows.

Voices I have not heard possessed
My own fresh songs; my thoughts are blessed
With relics of the far unknown;
And, mixed with memories not my own,
The sweet streams throng into my breast.

Before this life began to be,
The happy songs that wake in me
Woke long ago and far apart.
Heavily on this little heart
Presses this immortality.

BUILDERS OF RUINS.

We build with strength the deep tower-wall
That shall be shattered thus and thus.
And fair and great are court and hall,
But how fair—this is not for us,
Who dimly feel the want of all.

We know, we know how all too bright
All hues of ours though dimmed through tears,
And how the marble gleams too white;—
We speak in unknown tongues; the years
Interpret everything aright.

They crown with weeds our pride of towers,
And warm our marble through with sun,
And break our pavements through with flowers;
With an Amen when all is done,
Knowing these perfect things of ours.

O days, we ponder, left alone,
Like children in their lonely hour,
And in our secrets keep your own,
As seeds the colour of the flower.
To-day they are not all unknown—

The stars that 'twixt their rise and fall,
Like relic-seers, shall one by one
Stand musing o'er our empty hall;
And setting moons shall brood upon
The frescoes of our inward wall.

And when some midsummer shall be,
Hither shall come some little one
(Dusty with bloom of flowers is he),
Sit on the ruin i' the late long sun,
And think, one foot upon his knee.

And where they wrought, these lives of ours,
So many worded, many souled,
A north-west wind will take the towers
And dark with colour, sunny and cold,
Will range alone among the flowers.

And here or there, at our desire,
The little clamorous owl shall sit
Through her still time; and we aspire
To make a law (and know not it)
Unto the life of a wild briar.

We have a purpose perfect, dear,
Though from our consciousness 'tis hidden.
Thou, Time to come, shalt make it clear,
Undoing our work; we are children chidden
With pity, and smiles of many a year.

Who shall allot the praise, and guess
What part is yours and what is ours?—
O years that certainly will bless
Our flowers with fruits, our seeds with flowers,
With ruin all our perfectness.

Be patient, Time, of our delays,
Too happy hopes, and wasted fears,
Our faithful ways, our wilful ways.
Solace our labours, O our seers,
The seasons, and our bards the days;

And make our pause and silence brim
With the shrill children's play, and sweets
Of those pathetic flowers and dim,
Of those eternal flowers my Keats,
Dying, felt growing over him.

LADY CHARLOTTE ELLIOT.

THE WIFE OF LOKI.

CURSED by the gods and crowned with shame,
  Fell father of a direful brood,
Whose crimes have filled the heaven with flame
  And drenched the earth with blood.

Loki, the guileful Loki, stands
  Within a rocky mountain-gorge;
Chains gird his body, feet, and hands,
  Wrought in no mortal forge.

Coiled on the rock, a mighty snake
  Above him, day and night, is hung,
With dull malignant eyes awake,
  And poison-dropping tongue.

Drop follows drop in ceaseless flow,
  Each falling where the other fell,
To lay upon his blistered brow
  The liquid fire of hell.

But lo, beside the howling wretch
A woman stands, devoid of dread,
And one pale arm is seen to stretch
Above his tortured head.

All through the day is lifted up,
And all the weary night-time through,
One patient hand that holds a cup
To catch the poison-dew.

Sometimes the venom overfills
The cup, and she must pour it forth,
With Loki's curses then the hills
Are rent from south to north.

But she in answer only sighs,
And lays her lips upon his face,
And, with love's anguish in her eyes,
Resumes her constant place.

LOUISA S. BEVINGTON.

THE VALLEY OF REMORSE.

THERE goes a wandering soul in desert places ;
(Good Lord, deliver !)
About its way, lie dumb, with livid faces,
Slain virtues and slain hopes in locked embraces ;
(Good Lord, deliver !)
And drear black crags tower from unholy ground
Sheer upward in thick air,
Where breathes no prayer ;
No wind is there,
No sound ;
(Good Lord, deliver !)
And there is no way out, and round and round,
With haggard eye and dragged and staggering paces,
Through years that soul a ghastly circuit traces.
(Good Lord, deliver !)

The sun, all shorn of rays, with lurid fire
Blasts where it strikes : Doom's own red eye of ire :
And all night long is seen unhallowed shimmer,—
Half life, half mire,—

Of things made manifest that should be hid;
Yet Will is numb that should their play forbid;
And so they crowd and crawl in gloom and glimmer,
Loathed and unchid;
And lo that soul among them, moving dimmer,
(Good Lord, deliver!)

At the soul's back behold a burden yonder,
A monstrous thing of slime;
Two paces forth,—no more,—that Doomed may wander
For all its time,—
Two wretched paces from the accursed weight
Bound on by linkèd fate
In glittering cynic chain two steps behind it;
(Good Lord, deliver!)
Such steely bond between
Forbids it breath, save only to remind it
The Past has been,
The Past of sin.
(Good Lord, deliver!)

Ay! just where life is holiest—at the source
Of the soft, ruffled wings,—is chained the curse
(Good Lord, deliver!
Those pinions, once all light and wide of feather,
That soared right loftily, see, clamped together;
And quivering life is gallèd at the spot,
Sore hurt and hot:
(Good Lord, deliver!)

Yet, chafes that soul rebellious at the tether?
Or, in vain swiftness seeks to flee the load?
Then heavier fall the blood-drops on the road:—
(Good Lord, deliver!)

The loathèd burden of unburied death
Flies fast as flies that Doomed, or drags as slow:
(Good Lord, deliver!)
Two paces forward ever may it go;
No more; the burden grimly followeth.
There is no freedom here,
Nor any cheer!
(Good Lord, deliver!)

Not lightened yet to skeleton, nor dried,
The load yields horror, horror yet beside;
Fell fumes, half poison and half sustenance,
That hinder life, and hinder deathly trance,
Is there a chance?
(Good Lord, deliver!)

. . . . . .

Three virgin forms came passing by but lately,
Treading the desert boldly and sedately,
Calling it "beauteous earth,"
Who met this Doomed, and gazed upon it straightly;
(Good Lord, deliver!)
These saw no burden, so they praised the chain;
Its treacherous glitter seemed some bauble worn
About the wingèd shoulders to adorn.
(Good Lord, deliver!)

They noted on the path no shocking stain,
So, as the soul made moan,
Knowing no whit of conflict nor of pain,
Deemed it most vain,
And answered in gay tone—
"Now Heaven deliver thee,
Spirit alone!—
Why grievest thou when every bird is singing,
And glad white cloudlets high in ether winging
Brighten e'en sunshine? Hear the steeples ringing
With marriage mirth!
Behold life blest with love and holiday
While thou art stricken, bent, and wan to see;
Good Lord, deliver thee!"

All mutely points that soul beyond the chain
Two paces backward; points in vain, in vain;—
Who sees not, cannot aid.
Oh kind, unkindly virgin sympathy!
Oh blind, hell-deepening, heavenly mockery!
What though each maid
Had pitied had she seen; not one could see,
Not one of three.
(Good Lord, deliver!)

They passed, and music with them. Then there came
Three little children, joying e'en the same,
Yet sweetlier still. They called the desert "May."
(Good Lord, deliver!)
"Come with us and play;

Blue skies and meadows green are friends to-day;
Spread thy good wings, that we may mount thereon
And seek of all the clouds the whitest one
To tiptoe on its top toward the sun;
And prove whose sight is strongest!
And who can gaze the longest;
Our little eyes are clear,—
Young, but so clear!
In each of thine there trembles half a tear!
Ah! fun!—
We see where thou canst see not; in the eye
Of the great golden sun that crowns the sky!"
(Good Lord, deliver!)

A mother and a father wandered by:
Hand locked in hand.—"This way the children went,"
Quoth he, "on some enchanting mischief bent;
Behold, their little footprints thickly lie."
"Bless them!" quoth she: then closer to his side
Drew shudderingly: "An influence is here,
Here in the air; the sunlight seemeth drear,
Oh, lead me hence!" and he:
"'Tis so; I see a form unmeet to see
Advancing painfully.
Oh fear!
Lest the sweet babies lingered near the spot,
For something foul doth surely somewhere rot
It boots not to know what.
Hence! spirit dear."
(Good Lord, deliver!)

Maiden and babe and mother have passed by
Scatheless, yet left the doom glare red and high
Above the blackened valley of all dole,
Nor freed the laden soul.
Crawl, ye foul formless ills! about your prey;
Sink, O thrice lost! forsaken on the way;
Perish from day!
Since thrice hath passed in vain the innocent,
And hope is long, long spent,
And will is rent.
(Good Lord! Great God! deliver! deliver!)

Lo! Love comes wandering on the desert way.
Oh, watch! oh, pray!
Love with the rose-wreath red?
Ay, love rose-bound!
Ay, love thorn-crowned!
Crowned—bound—with cruel rose-thorns round his head!
(Good Lord, deliver!)

Love! love is here! that knoweth of all pain,
And of the linkèd chain,
And of the stain,
And of the whirling madness, dumb and dread;
Love! love is here that knoweth nought in vain!
Dead hope, dead will, oh! cry
Aloud! Love passeth by;
Love, that can love dead life to live again!
(Good Lord, deliver!)

New radiance hallows all the sickening air;
For love is here.
And right and left spring lilies at his nod,
Blessing the blighted sod,
For Love is here,
And round the gaunt crags echo of deep prayer
Is sighing everywhere!
Is sighing everywhere!
For love is here.

(Deliver! Lord, deliver!)

Kneels that worn soul, for all the place is holy;
Breaks that sore heart, in utterance lost and lowly;—
"For Love's dear sake, great Powers, deliver me!
O LOVE, deliver me!"

. . . . . .

A little bird sweet twitters in a tree;
A little breeze comes coolly from the sea;
And broad the dawn-light widens o'er the lea.

MATHILDE BLIND.

CHANTS OF LIFE.

I.

Lo, moving o'er chaotic waters,
  Love dawned upon the seething waste,
Transformed in ever new avatars
  It moved without or pause or haste:
Like sap that moulds the leaves of May
It wrought within the ductile clay.

And vaguely in the pregnant deep,
  Clasped by the glowing arms of light,
From an eternity of sleep
  Within unfathomed gulfs of night
A pulse stirred in the plastic slime
Responsive to the rhythm of Time.

Enkindled in the mystic dark
  Life built herself a myriad forms,
And, flashing its electric spark
  Through films and cells and pulps and worms,
Flew shuttlewise above, beneath,
Weaving the web of life and death.

And multiplying in the ocean,
  Amorphous, rude, colossal things
Lolled on the ooze in lazy motion,
  Armed with grim jaws or uncouth wings;
Helpless to lift their cumbering bulk
They lurch like some dismasted hulk.

And virgin forest, verdant plain,
  The briny sea, the balmy air,
Each blade of grass and globe of rain,
  And glimmering cave and gloomy lair
Began to swarm with beasts and birds,
With floating fish and fleet-foot herds.

The lust of life's delirious fires
  Burned like a fever in their blood,
Now pricked them on with fierce desires,
  Now drove them famishing for food,
To seize coy females in the fray,
Or hotly hunted hunt for prey.

And amorously urged them on
  In wood or wild to court their mate,
Proudly displaying in the sun
  With antics strange and looks elate,
The vigour of their mighty thews
Or charm of million-coloured hues.

There crouching 'mid the scarlet bloom,
  Voluptuously the leopard lies,
And through the tropic forest gloom
  The flaming of his feline eyes
Stirs with intoxicating stress
The pulses of the leopardess.

Or two swart bulls of self-same age
  Meet furiously with thunderous roar,
And lash together, blind with rage,
  And clanging horns that fain would gore
Their rival, and so win the prize
Of those impassive female eyes.

Or in the nuptial days of spring,
  When April kindles bush and brier,
Like rainbows that have taken wing,
  Or palpitating gems of fire,
Bright butterflies in one brief day
Live but to love and pass away.

And herds of horses scour the plains,
  The thickets scream with bird and beast,
The love of life burns in their veins,
  And from the mightiest to the least
Each preys upon the other's life
In inextinguishable strife.

War rages on the teeming earth;
  The hot and sanguinary fight
Begins with each new creature's birth:
  A dreadful war where might is right;
Where still the strongest slay and win,
Where weakness is the only sin.

There is no truce to this drawn battle,
  Which ends but to begin again;
The drip of blood, the hoarse death-rattle,
  The roar of rage, the shriek of pain,
Are rife in fairest grove and dell,
Turning earth's flowery haunts to hell.

A hell of hunger, hatred, lust,
  Which goads all creatures here below,
Or blindworm wriggling in the dust,
  Or penguin in the Polar snow:
A hell where there is none to save,
Where life is life's insatiate grave.

And in the long portentous strife,
  Where types are tried even as by fire,
Where life is whetted upon life
  And step by panting step mounts higher,
Apes lifting hairy arms now stand
And free the wonder-working hand.

They raise a light, aërial house
  On shafts of widely branching trees,
Where, harboured warily, each spouse
  May feed her little ape in peace,
Green cradled in his heaven-roofed bed,
Leaves rustling lullabies o'erhead.

And lo, 'mid reeking swarms of earth
  Grim struggling in the primal wood,
A new strange creature hath its birth:
  Wild—stammering—nameless—shameless—
    nude;
Spurred on by want, held in by fear,
He hides his head in caverns drear.

Most unprotected of earth's kin,
  His fight for life that seems so vain
Sharpens his senses, till within
  The twilight mazes of his brain,
Like embryos within the womb,
Thought pushes feelers through the gloom.

And slowly in the fateful race
  It grows unconscious, till at length
The helpless savage dares to face
  The cave-bear in his grisly strength;
For stronger than its bulky thews
He feels a force that grows with use.

From age to dumb unnumbered age,
  By dim gradations long and slow,
He reaches on from stage to stage,
  Through fear and famine, weal and woe,
And, compassed round with danger, still,
Prolongs his life by craft and skill.

With cunning hand he shapes the flint,
  He carves the horn with strange device,
He splits the rebel block by dint
  Of effort—till one day there flies
A spark of fire from out the stone:
Fire which shall make the world his own.

THE DEAD.

THE dead abide with us! Though stark and cold
  Earth seems to grip them, they are with us still:
  They have forged our chains of being for good or ill;
And their invisible hands these hands yet hold.
Our perishable bodies are the mould
  In which their strong imperishable will—
  Mortality's deep yearning to fulfil—
Hath grown incorporate through dim time untold.

Vibrations infinite of life in death,
  As a star's travelling light survives its star!
  So may we hold our lives, that when we are
The fate of those who then will draw this breath,
  They shall not drag us to their judgment-bar,
And curse the heritage which we bequeath.

THE REAPERS.

SUN-TANNED men and women, toiling there together;
Seven I count in all, in yon field of wheat,
Where the rich ripe ears in the harvest weather
Glow an orange gold through the sweltering heat.

Busy life is still, sunk in brooding leisure:
Birds have hushed their singing in the hushed tree-tops;
Not a single cloud mars the flawless azure;
Not a shadow moves o'er the moveless crops;

In the glassy shallows, that no breath is creasing,
Chestnut-coloured cows in the rushes dank
Stand like cows of bronze, save when they flick the teasing
Flies with switch of tail from each quivering flank.

Nature takes a rest—even her bees are sleeping,
And the silent wood seems a church that's shut;
But these human creatures cease not from their reaping
While the corn stands high, waiting to be cut.

LOVE'S COMPLETENESS.

I WAS again beside thee in a dream:
  Earth was so beautiful, the moon was shining;
The muffled voice of many a cataract stream
  Came like a love-song, as, with arms entwining,
Our hearts were mixed in unison supreme.

The wind lay spell-bound in each pillared pine,
  The tasselled larches had no sound or motion,
As my whole life was sinking into thine—
  Sinking into a deep, unfathomed ocean
Of infinite love—uncircumscribed, divine.

Night held her breath, it seemed, with all her stars;
  Eternal eyes that watched in mute compassion
Our little lives o'erleap their mortal bars,
  Fused in the fulness of immortal passion,
A passion as immortal as the stars.

There was no longer any thee or me;
  No sense of self, no wish or incompleteness;
A moment, rounded to Eternity,
  Annihilated time's destructive fleetness:
For all but love itself had ceased to be.

L'ENVOY.

THOU art the goal for which my spirit longs:
As dove on dove,
Bound for one home, I send thee all my songs
With all my love.

Thou art the haven with fair harbour-lights;
Safe locked in thee,
My heart would anchor after stormful nights
Alone at sea.

Thou art the rest of which my life is fain,
The perfect peace;
Absorbed in thee the world, with all its pain
And toil, would cease.

Thou art the heaven to which my soul would go!
O dearest eyes,
Lost in your light you would turn hell below
To Paradise.

Thou all in all for which my heart-blood yearns!
Yea, near or far—
Where the unfathomed ether throbs and burns
With star on star,

Or where, enkindled by the fires of June,
The fresh earth glows,
Blushing beneath the mystical white moon
Through rose on rose.—

Thee, thee I see, thee feel in all live things,
Beloved one;
In the first bird that tremulously sings
Ere peep of sun;

In the last nestling orphaned in the hedge,
Rocked to and fro,
When dying summer shudders through the sedge,
And swallows go;

When roaring snows rush down the mountain-pass,
March floods the rills,
Or April lightens through the living grass
In daffodils;

When poppied cornfields simmer in the heat
With tare and thistle,
And, like winged clouds above the mellow wheat,
The starlings whistle;

When stained with sunset the wide moorlands glare
In the wild weather,
And clouds with flaming craters smoke and flare
Red o'er red heather;

When the bent moon, on frost-bound midnights waking,
Leans to the snow
Like some world-mother whose deep heart is breaking
O'er human woe.

As the round sun rolls red into the ocean,
Till all the sea
Glows fluid gold, even so life's mazy motion
Is dyed with thee:

For as the wave-like years subside and roll,
O heart's desire,
Thy soul glows interfused within my soul
A quenchless fire.

Yea, thee I feel, all storms of life above,
Near though afar;
O thou, my glorious morning star of love,
And evening star.

EMILY H. HICKEY.

HAREBELLS.

BLUE BELLS, on blue hills, where the sky is blue,
Here's a little blue-gowned maid come to look at you;
Here's a little child would fain, at the vesper time,
Catch the music of your hearts, hear the harebells chime.
"Little hares, little hares," softly prayeth she,
"Come, come across the hills, and ring the bells for me."

When do hares ring the bells, does my lady say?
Is it when the sky is rosed with the coming day?
Is it in the strength of noon, all the earth aglow?
Is it when at eventide sweet dew falleth slow?
Any time the bells may ring, morn, or noon, or even;
Lovebells, joybells, earthbells heard in heaven.
Any time the happy hills may be lightly swept
By the ringers' little feet; any time, except
When by horse and hound and man, chased and frighted sore,
Weak and panting, little hares care to ring no more.
It must be upon the hills where the hunt comes ne'er,
Chimes of bells ring out at touch of the little hare.
Harebells, blue bells, ring, ring again!
Set a-going, little hares, the joyaunce of the strain.

Not a hare to ring the bells on the whole hillside?
Could *she* make the harebells ring, if my darling tried?
Harebells, harebells, a little child blue-gowned
Stands and listens longingly; little hands embrowned
Touch you; rose mouth kisses you: ring out!
Is a little child a thing any flower should flout?
Child's hand on poet's heart makes it bloom in song!
Let her hear your fairy chimes, delicate ding-dong.
Let her hear what poet's voice never caught nor sung:
Let a child ring the bells little hares have sung!
Soft she whispers to the flowers, bending o'er them there,
"*Let me ring your bonny bells! I'm a little hare!*
No, I'm only a little child, but I love you so!
Let me ring your little bells, just to say, you know."
Harebells, blue bells, ring, ring again!
Set a-going, little child, the joyaunce of the strain.

Oh, the look upon her face for the music heard!
Is it wind in fairy soughs? Is it far-off bird?
Does the child hear melody grown folk cannot hear?
Is the harebells' music now chiming on her ear?
Father, give this little child, as she goeth on,
Evermore to keep the gift by this music won:
Gift which makes this earth of ours very Paradise
For delight of opened ears, joy of opened eyes.
Harebells, joybells, lovebells, dear and blest,
Ring in the sacredness of her happy breast.

MADONNA DELLA VITA.

WHOSO will let him cast off the robe of his faith
And the crown of his hope and the sceptre of love,
And lie at the feet of the Lady of Death,
Enwrapt in the slumber no trouble of breath,
No tempest of joy or of sorrow can move.
Not thine be such rest, O my brother, my knight,
Who ownest the mighty ones' sinews and thews:
Not theirs and not thine to despair and refuse
The forefront of battle, the thickest of fight.

I charge thee by all thou esteemest of worth
Around thee and in thee, below and above,
By the hintings of heaven from the lips of the earth
As she smiles in the clasp of the infinite love;
By that infinite love which around us lies light
As the ether, or grips like a stark fate austere;
By the light and the darkness, the veiled and the clear;
By the mystical glories of red and of white;
By the little we guess and the much we shall know
Of the meaning of things that bewilder us here
With fairness, and foulness, and gladness, and woe:

I charge thee to stand, though bedewed with the sweat
That is blood, armour hacked, and upon thee the stains
Of travail and conflict, and over thee pain's
Broad banner of dim, heavy purple, and wet
With the floods thou hast past through to come to this place:
For the foe is alive yet, and nothing of grace
Must he have at thy hands till thou smite him to death;
Thy foe who has vowed to fordo her whose breath
In the world's nostrils breathed made it quicken, and lo!
No longer red clay, but a glory and glow,
And a flame, which is God, whosoever gainsaith.

She stood in her splendour of beauty and grace
By Socrates' side, and she breathed on his soul
Till it would not be foiled by the strange satyr-face,
The mask of the clay that was fain to control.
By Gautama stood she and kindled desire
For the fairer than fair, and her love was the fire
The radiant, the lustral, that touched him and caught
The heart of the prince till it flamed up one red
In that light and its passion, and self lay all dead
To rise never more, for the man was of those
To whom hunger or fulness, or toil or repose,
Or glory or shame, seeing God, matters nought.

Her hand held the Christ's from the womb to the grave,
Through the flowerland of childhood that smiled as he stept,
On, on, through the wilds where the heather scarce kept
One touch of God's purple, hoar hill, and lone cave;
On, on, to the heights that in sheer steepness frowned,
Jagged cliffs, black for awe of the elements' strife,
She led him unswerving, until he had found
The terrible cruciform portal of life.

Thou didst pledge her, unknowing, when speechless thou lay'st,
In the milk of thy mother; and, later, in wine
Of the world's life that thrilled through the young veins of thine,
In the splendid excess that knew nothing of waste;
Thou didst pledge her, 'mid horror and darkness, in brine
Of the terrible waters that swept over thee
Bedrenching and beating: then, 'scaped from the flood,
Didst thou stand by thy lady and look on that sea,
And pledge her again, and the cup was thy blood.

Thy lady! thou know'st her: her eyes are the light
Of the world, and her heart is the fountain of joy,
And her lips are light-curved to a smile, never coy
But quickening and calming: and grand is her height

And stately her going, and wondrous the white
Of her brows; and her name—She hath many a name,
As Love, Truth, Life, Sorrow; and whom she doth claim
By the pledge he unshrinking redeems, he alone
(Oh, pride for dishonour! oh, glory for blame!)
Shall know by which name she delights to be known.

A SEA STORY.

SILENCE. A while ago
Shrieks went up piercingly;
But now is the ship gone down;
Good ship, well manned, was she.
There's a raft that's a chance of life for one,
This day upon the sea.

A chance for one of two;
Young, strong, are he and he,
Just in the manhood prime,
The comelier, verily,
For the wrestle with wind and weather and wave,
In the life upon the sea.

One of them has a wife
And little children three;
Two that can toddle and lisp;
And a suckling on the knee;
Naked they'll go and hunger sore,
If he be lost at sea.

One has a dream of home,
A dream that well may be;
He never has breathed it yet;

She never has known it, she.
But some one will be sick at heart,
If he be lost at sea.

"Wife and kids and home!—
Wife, kids, nor home has he!—
Give us a chance, Bill!" Then,
"All right, Jem!" Quietly
A man gives up his life for a man,
This day upon the sea.

A. MARY F. ROBINSON.

DARWINISM.

When first the unflowering Fern-forest
  Shadowed the dim lagoons of old,
A vague unconscious long unrest
  Swayed the great fronds of green and gold.

Until the flexible stem grew rude,
  The fronds began to branch and bower,
And lo! upon the unblossoming wood
  There breaks a dawn of apple-flower.

Then on the fruitful Forest-boughs
  For ages long the unquiet ape
Swung happy in his airy house
  And plucked the apple and sucked the grape,

Until in him at length there stirred
  The old, unchanged, remote distress,
That pierced his world of wind and bird
  With some divine unhappiness.

Not Love, nor the wild fruits he sought;
  Nor the fierce battles of his clan
Could still the unborn and aching thought
  Until the brute became the man.

Long since. . . . And now the same unrest
  Goads to the same invisible goal,
Till some new gift, undreamed, unguessed
  End the new travail of the soul.

THE IDEA.

BENEATH this world of stars and flowers
That rolls in visible deity,
I dream another world is ours
And is the soul of all we see.

It hath no form, it hath no spirit;
It is perchance the Eternal mind;
Beyond the sense that we inherit
I feel it dim and undefined.

How far below the depth of being,
How wide beyond the starry bound;
It rolls unconscious and unseeing,
And is as Number or as Sound.

And through the vast fantastic visions
Of all this actual universe,
It moves unswerved by our decisions
And is the play that we rehearse.

PRELUDE.

NOT only in great cities dwells great crime ;
Not where they dash ashore, and break and moan,
Are waters deadliest; and not in rhyme,
Nor ever in words, the deepest heart is shown.
But, lost in silence, fearful things are known
To lonely souls, dumb passions, shoreless seas;
And he who fights with Death may shrink from these.

Alas ! not all the greenness of the leaves,
Not all their delicate tremble in the air,
Can pluck one stab from a fierce heart that grieves.
The harvest-moon slants on as sordid care
As wears its heart out under attic eaves;
And though all round those folded mountains sleep,
Think you that sin and heart-break are less deep ?

You see the shepherd and his flocks a-field,
Hunger and passion are present there, no less.
Fearful ! when suddenly starts forth revealed
Man's soul, unneighboured in its hideousness,
Man's darker soul, a memory to possess
Henceforth, by which all nature pales and dies,
As a city suddenly wan under sunset skies.

And I have heard long since, and I have seen,
Wrong that has sunk like iron into my soul,
That has eaten into my heart, has burned me and been
A pang and pity past my own control;
And I have wept to think what such things mean,
And I have said I will not weep alone,
Others shall sorrow and know as I have known.

Others shall learn and shudder, and sorrow, and know
What shame is in the world they will not see.
They cover it up with leaves, they make a show
Of Maypole garlands over, but there shall be
A wind to scatter their gauds, and a wind to blow
And purify the hidden dreaded thing
Festering underneath; and so I sing.

If God had given a sword into my hand,
I would go forth and fight the battles of God;
If God had given me wisdom, I would stand
And summon up truth with my divining rod:
But I have only a song at my command,
The froth of the world a song, as water weak:
Yet since it is my weapon, let me speak.

And listen you that are more mighty than I,
Who can go forth and do what I but dream—
Bear with me if I am vain, bear patiently.
I have lived so long with shadows, who only seem,
That now these real men murdered make me cry,
As there were none on earth but I and they,
And all else echoes, phantoms, witches' play.

But this is real, that men are wild and hard
And villainous; while other men look on
And say it is not so; a smell of nard
And not of blood is here; not woe-begone
These faces, but content. Ah, what reward
For all our strife had we their quiet homes
And quiet hearts and wish that never roams!

So say ye; for to think in all the world
There is so still and sweet a resting-place,
Where never the angry seas of passion are hurled
Against necessity, where none is base
And none is starved. There is a sort of grace
To keep so sweet a vision in our eyes,
And as you smile the true thing starves and dies.

Oh, help! help! it is murder that I cry,
And not a song to sell. Now if you smile
And hear me you are mad; you are mad, or I!
For I do not sing to enchant you or beguile;
I sing to make you think enchantment vile,
I sing to wring your hearts and make you know
What shame there is in the world, what wrongs,
what woe.

Because your deaf ears, only, are in blame,
Not your deaf hearts. Look now, and if you see
Men as they are, contented in their shame,
I know that you will help, you will let them be
Foreseeing, noble, wise, and even as ye;—

Only your eyes I ask, only your ears,
The rest I leave to him who sees and hears.

Then let me sing, and listen to my song,
Though it is rough with sobs, and harsh and wild,
And often wanders, and is often long,
As mothers tell the death-bed of their child.
My child was gentle visions, and all were wrong,
And false, and cruel; and I bury it here:
Lend me your spades,—I do not ask a tear.

Lend me your souls, and do not stand aloof,
Saying what happy lives these peasants win,
Praising the plushy lichen on the roof.
Leave off your praising, brothers, and come in.
See, round the hearth, squat Ignorance, Fever, Sin,
See on the straw the starving baby cries;
The mother thanks her God another dies.

Ah, look within! Without, the world is fair,
And you are all in love with solitude;
Yet look within: Evil and Pain are there.
Look, ye who say Life best is understood
Where greenish light falls dappling the moss-floored wood,
Look at the dumb brute souls who suffer and strive;—
Leave the dead world, and make their souls alive!

JANET FISHER.

PART I.

WHERE Janet Fisher lived and died,
  The Eastland marshes reach away
For miles on miles of either side,
A river desolately wide
  That is itself as drear as they.

With tufts of purple marish flowers
  The rough grey grass is islanded;
The travelling thunder broods for hours
In gathered purple, when there lowers
  The frequent tempest overhead.

Immense the eternal arch of sky;
  Immense—utterly barren, too—
The plain in which no mountains lie
To mar that vastness, bounded by
  The far horizon's shadowy blue.

Only the river's gradual bend
  Shows stunted willows set in rows,
Rank pasture, kine the children tend,
Blown curls of smoke that swerve and ascend
  From leaning hovels clustered close.

For on this barren aguish swamp,
  Even here is life, even here are men
To shake with palsy, stiffen with cramp,
To die ere fifty of the damp
  And fetid vapours of the fen.

Though how a village came to grow
  In such a vile and deathly air,
None knows; it may be long ago
The outcast of some crime or woe,
  Fleeing for refuge, sheltered there;

And through the habit of their race,
  Or fearing yet the wrath of men,
Their children settled in the place,
And reaped scant harvest, in the face
  Of death, upon the poisonous fen.

And since the end was always near,
  And life so hard; and since they knew,
Save sloth and lust, no joys; each year
They served their senses less in fear,
  And more like beasts and viler grew.

Few friends were there, tho' all were kin:
  There was much strife, and many raids;
The hovels that they huddled in
Housed men whose brutal love was sin,
  Nameless children, and shameless maids.

Even among this soulless herd
  Lived Janet Fisher; but she went
Along their streets, and no man stirred
Her quiet heart with look or word
  To harm the village Innocent.

They meant she was an idiot born,
  This one fair sight in foulest place;
This girl as fresh as early morn;
So fair—and yet too sad to scorn;
  Too sunk for any hind to embrace.

Their one fair thing; their one thing good,
  And she bereft of sense or will,
So were a mask of womanhood—
Sad,—but there was no heart to brood,
  Upon the irremediable ill.

Yet crazy Janet found them kind—
  They took her when her mother died
To live by turn with each; to wind
Their well-ropes, bind their sheaves, and mind
  Their cattle grazing far and wide.

Yet often by the river-brim
  She strayed, scattering seeds and flowers,
To wade in clear green shallows, and swim
Against the stream; or, through the dim
  And quiet twilight, row for hours.

Day long, night long, her spirit slept,
And nothing shook the sullen drowse;
Yet oft a shadowy pleasure crept
All through her, where the boats were kept,
Beneath the dangling willow boughs.

She was so strong, she liked to feel
Her rapid stroke lend wings to the boat;
The water dashing against the keel;
The wind in her face and hair; the teal
And plovers crying; the weeds afloat.

Then only she—who was so far
Behind the merest child of all—
Was prouder, stronger, than others are;
And she could row to the harbour bar
And back, ten miles, ere night-dews fall.

PART II.

But all the harvest long, forlorn,
Unloosed, the boat rocked to and fro
While Janet slept from eve till morn,
Dead-tired with gathering in the corn
From daybreak till the light was low.

How glad she was when autumn whirled
The slender yellowing willow leaves,
When all the plants looked shrivelled and curled,
And no more corn or fruit in the world
Was left to gather under eaves.

For then one evening, when the plain
  Was strangely bright i' the sun, and black
With thunder and unfallen rain
The sky, she sought her boat again,
  And bent the yielding branches back—

The thinning willow boughs—and found
  A man half-stripped, beside the boat,
Burying hurriedly underground
And heaping yellow leaves around
  A stained and faded soldier's coat.

She stood beside him, nothing loth
  To watch his work unseen a span,
For she was neither scared nor wroth;
The splendour of the scarlet cloth
  Engrossed her, not the ragged man.

"Give me it!" eager Janet said
  At last; the man who heard her shook
Alarmed, and turned his startled head.
He was as wan and grey as the dead,
  And even Janet feared his look.

"All's up," he moaned. "Ay, call them out!
  I'm spent, you're strong," he moaned;—"hit
    hard,
I'm down. Don't stare so, woman; shout!
Why, don't you know what you're about?
  I'm a deserter—there's reward.

"I'm spent." But towards the scarlet coat
He saw unheeding Janet go;
Then turned, and turning saw the boat,
"Oh, God!" he cried, with straining throat,
"Girl, will you help me? I can row."

Poor Janet!—all those prayers were vain
To reach the incommunicable
Dim soul in her; and yet 'twas plain
He wished her, prayed her, to remain—
And one thing only she could do well.

She smiled. Her masters on the fen
Bade her: Do this, bear such a load,
Go there—for they were brutish men.
But this man spake her fair; and then
She longed to show him how well she rowed.

Within her boat she took her stand;
He followed her unquestioningly,
Got in, sat down, at her command;
She pushed her boat off from the land,
And, with the current, sought the sea.

Fierce yellow sunlight, beetling clouds
Heaped up in blackness overhead;
Still air in which the beasts were cowed,
And all the sounds were over-loud—
Yet Janet felt no thrill of dread.

Inland the sea-mews fled, that know
  The earliest tempest-mutterings;
The swallows, skimming very low,
Dipped, and a livid western glow
  Glanced off their sheeny underwings.

On through the ominous dusk the bark
  That knew no fear, that had no soul,
Made for the sea. How should it hark
The wind, or see the air grow dark,
  Or feel the widening waters roll?

And soulless as itself, and rash,
  Janet rowed on elate and proud;
And thankful to escape the lash,
Her fellow heard no waters dash,
  And did not see the gathering cloud.

Speechless he drowsed for many a mile,
  Sunk to inert fatigue, half dead;
At last: "It takes a long, long while,"
He muttered. Janet turned—her smile
  Filled all his veins with sudden dread.

He started, shook the torpid drowse
  Off him like water; all around
The river heaved in waves; and soughs
And moans of wind began to arouse
  The storm; he could not see the ground.

Black walls of stormy air shut in
The boat; above, a gloomy vault
Shattered by lightning; roar and din
Where sea and hurtling stream begin
Their desperate, endless rebuff and assault.

"Woman!" he shouted; "mad-woman! speak,—
Why did you let me sleep so long?
Is it the sea, the sea, you seek?"
The tears fell into the spray on her cheek:
"Help me," she wailed; "I'm spent, you're strong."

His words! his prayer! No safety, then,
If she were mad; no means to avert
The end. Far backwards lay the fen,
And here, instead of a world of men,
A danger no man shall desert.

Had she gone mad, perhaps, from fright,
This woman? "Oh, my God!" he cried;
"To be alone at sea by night;
Lost in a storm—no hope, no light;
A maniac for my only guide!"

She crouched upon the lowest plank
And cried, and dashed her hands in the wave
That drenched her dress, and made so lank,
And straight her hair—that slowly sank
Them down towards the engulfing grave.

The man stooped down and looked at her,
  Half-blind with swirling spray of the sea.
Horror, impotent wrath, despair
At heart. What did she say? A prayer?
  "Poor crazy Janet; pity me!"

Then he was lost in very truth—
  How wild his hope! how vain his trust!
This woman—this, his angel of ruth—
Had lured him to his death; in sooth,
  To kill her would be merely just.

Should he kill her? Sea and sky,
  In answering storms heaved up, hung down;
They seemed to touch, they met so nigh,
One moment more all else must die:
  Why should he kill her? Let her drown!

"Help me!" she shrieked. But who could swim
  In such a sea,—a toppling bank
Of waves. She sprang, and clung to him;
Then noise, hate, storm, death, all grew dim;
  He caught her—tried to save her—sank.

But when the storm was stilled at last,
  The fishers found him on the strand,
One arm stretched out, still battling past
The waves, it seemed, and clasping fast
  A woman's corpse with one stiff hand.

They knew him not, but her they knew;
Poor Janet, missed a day and night,
Then wind-uncovered, stained with dew,
They found the coat; the wonder grew,
And the sad story came to light.

CONSTANCE C. W. NADEN.

SUNSET.

THE sun is setting—not in colours gay,
But pure as when he blazed with noon-day heat;
The upland path is gold before my feet,
Save where long, dancing, poplar-shadows play,
Or arching lindens cast a broader grey:
This radiant hour, when peace and passion meet,
Stirs with tumultuous breezes, freshly sweet,
The odorous languor of an August day.

Above is peace; below is gleeful strife;
Aflame with sunshine, battling with the wind,
The trees rejoice in plenitude of life:
A sea of light is sleeping in the west,
Untroubled light, o'erflowing heart and mind
With that empyreal rapture, which is rest.

THE PANTHEIST'S SONG OF IMMORTALITY.

BRING snow-white lilies, pallid heart-flushed roses,
  Enwreathe her brow with heavy scented flowers;
In soft undreaming sleep her head reposes,
  While, unregretted, pass the sunlit hours.

Few sorrows did she know—and all are over;
  A thousand joys—but they are all forgot;
Her life was one fair dream of friend and lover,
  And were they false—ah, well, she knows it not.

Look in her face and lose thy dread of dying;
  Weep not, that rest will come, that toil will cease;
Is it not well to lie as she is lying,
  In utter silence, and in perfect peace?

Canst thou repine that sentient days are numbered?
  Death is unconscious Life, that waits for birth;
So didst thou live, while yet thine embryo slumbered,
  Senseless, unbreathing, e'en as heaven and earth.

Then shrink no more from Death, though Life be gladness,
  Nor seek him, restless in thy lonely pain;
The law of joy ordains each hour of sadness,
  And firm or frail, thou canst not live in vain.

What though thy name by no sad lips be spoken,
And no fond heart shall keep thy memory green?
Thou yet shalt leave thine own enduring token,
For earth is not as though thou ne'er hadst been.

See yon broad current, hasting to the ocean,
Its ripples glorious in the western red:
Each wavelet passes, trackless; yet its motion
Has changed for evermore the river bed.

Ah, wherefore weep, although the form and fashion
Of what thou seemest, fades like sunset flame?
The uncreated Source of toil and passion,
Through everlasting change abides the same.

Yes, thou shalt die: but these almighty forces,
That meet to form thee, live for evermore:
They hold the suns in their eternal courses,
And shape the tiny sand-grains on the shore.

Be calmly glad, thine own true kindred seeing
In fire and storm, in flowers with dew impearled;
Rejoice in thine imperishable being,
One with the essence of the boundless world.

AMY LEVY.

THE BIRCH-TREE AT LOSCHWITZ.

At Loschwitz above the city
  The air is sunny and chill;
The birch-trees and the pine-trees
  Grow thick upon the hill.

Lone and tall, with silver stem,
  A birch-tree stands apart;
The passionate wind of spring-time
  Stirs in its leafy heart.

I lean against the birch-tree,
  My arms around it twine;
It pulses, and leaps, and quivers,
  Like a human heart to mine.

One moment I stand, then sudden
  Let loose mine arms that cling:
O God! the lonely hillside,
  The passionate wind of spring!

SONNET.

MOST wonderful and strange it seems, that I
Who but a little time ago was lost
High on the waves of passion and of pain,
With aching heart and wildly throbbing brain,
Who peered into the darkness, deeming vain
All things there found if but One thing were lost,
Thus calm and still and silent here should lie,
Watching and waiting,—waiting passively.

The dark has faded, and before mine eyes
Have long, grey flats expanded, dim and bare;
And through the changing guises all things wear
Inevitable Law I recognise:
Yet in my heart a kind of feeling lies
Which half a hope and half is a despair.

THE TWO TERRORS.

Two terrors fright my soul by night and day:
The first is Life, and with her come the years;
A weary, winding train of maidens they,
With forward-fronting eyes, too sad for tears;
Upon whose kindred faces, blank and grey,
The shadow of a kindred woe appears.
Death is the second terror; who shall say
What form beneath the shrouding mantle nears?

Which way she turn, my soul finds no relief,
My smitten soul may not be comforted;
Alternately she swings from grief to grief,
And, poised between them, sways from dread to dread.
For there she dreads because she knows; and here,
Because she knows not, inly faints with fear.

ELLICE HOPKINS.

LIFE IN DEATH.

I HEARD him in the autumn winds,
I felt him in the cadent star,
And in the shattered mirror of the wave,
That still in death a rapture finds,
I caught his image faint and far;
And musing in the twilight on the grave,
I heard his footsteps stealing by,
Where the long churchyard grasses sigh.

But never might I see his face,
Though everywhere I found Death's hand,
And his large language all things living spake;
And ever heavy with the grace
Of bygone things through all the land
The song of birds or distant church-bells brake.
"I will arise and seek his face,"
I said, "ere wrapped in his embrace."

"For Death is king of life," I cried;
"Beauty is but his pomp and state;
His kiss is on the apple's crimson cheek,
And with the grape his feet are dyed,

Treading at noon the purple vat;
And flowers, more radiant hued, more quickly seek
His face betraying in disguise,
Their young blooms are but autumn dyes!"

Then I arose ere dawn, and found
A faded lily. "Lo, 'tis He!
I will surprise him in his golden bed,
Where, muffled close from light and sound,
He sleeps the day up." Noiselessly
I drew the faded curtains from his head,
And, peeping, found, not Death below,
But fairy life set all arow.

A chrysalis next I chanced upon:
"Death in this dusty shroud has dwelt!"
But stooping saw a wingèd Thing, sun-kist,
Crusted with jewels Life had won
From Death's dim dust; and as I knelt,
Some passion shook the jewels into mist,
Some ecstasy of coming flight,
And lo, he passed in morning light.

And as I paced, still questioning,
Behold, a dead bird at my feet;
The faded violets of his filmy eyes,
And tender loosened throat to sing
No more to us his nocturns sweet,
Told me that death at length before me lies.
But gazing, quick I turned in fear,
Not Death, but teeming Life was there.

Then haply Death keeps house within?
And with the scalpel of keen thought
I traced the chemic travail of the brain,
The throb and pulse of Life's machine,
And mystic force with force still caught
In the embrace that maketh one of twain;
And all the beating, swift and slow,
Of Life's vibrations to and fro.

And still I found the downward swing,
Decay, but ere I cried, "Lo, here!"
The upward stroke rang out glad life and breath
And still dead winters changed with spring,
And graves the new birth's cradle were;
And still I grasped the flying skirts of Death,
And still he turned, and, beaming fair,
The radiant face of Life was there.

A VISION OF WOMANHOOD.

OUT in the desert, half-submerged, a sphinx
Gazed at her awful mirrored loveliness,
In the dull deep waters sunk of Lethe, fed
By the dark river of the unknown source;
Gazed at the pure high face that answered hers,
As moon to moon, and lovely moulded curves
Of motherhood that shaped the pure white breast,
And deemed she saw herself, nor knew
That just below the shining surfaces
The woman sickened into unclean beast,
Bestial, with ravening claws and murderous strength;
And all around were strewn the bones of men,
And eyeless sockets filled with desert dust
Of those who cursed her with a dying curse.
Then a great Angel, standing in the sun,
Smote those dull Lethe-waters and they fled,
And all her hidden shame to her lay bare;
And in her agony she knew herself
To be half woman and half beast unclean,
That grew to her and made one shuddering flesh
With her, inextricably one with death.
And all her being burned as in a furnace,
And the cold stone was fused about her heart
Into warm blood and sweat of agony;
While men awe-stricken gazed upon her woe,

And every kingdom wailed because of her,
And all the land was darkened for her sake.
Then as one dead before her feet I fell,
Made one with her intolerable shame.
Æons or hours did that deep trance endure?
When the dark veil of that abysmal sleep
Was rent in twain by a loud trumpet sound,
And starting up, I saw a temple vast,
And many worshippers therein were bowed.
But on the upturned faces, I beheld
The light of a new world, and homage high,
As that a queen may render to her king,
Who owning a subjection yet remains
A majesty—such pure manhood on them lay.
And high above all worshippers enthroned,
Lo, the Egyptian woman who abode
With Death in desert places; and behold
The beast was slain, the deathful riddle solved
That slew the man; and throned upon men's
hearts—
A wall of fire to guard her round about—
A perfect woman in her weakness rose,
And in her arms the future's child divine.

MAY PROBYN.

SUDDEN DEATH.

TWIT-TWIT-TWITTER, all the merry morning through—
Twit-twit-twitter, from the twisted apple-tree—
Little nest among the blossom, little eggs of speckled blue,
Little mate, brown-breasted, brooding o'er them, one, and two, and three.
Twit-twit-twitter—just a little singing bird,
Just a handful of brown feathers,
That had chirped through winter weathers,
And a little heart that beat beneath the downy throat it stirred.

Chip-chip-chirrup, where the garden beds are green—
Just a minute's crash and terror—just the firing of a gun—
She may wait and she may weary, little mate, the boughs between,
For flight of his to flash across the blossom and the sun.
Chip-chip-chirrup, just a blood-bedabbled breast—
Just a tuft of down and feather,
Clinging piteously together,
And a small brown thing that never more will sing beside a nest.

VILLANELLE.

In every sound, I think I hear her feet—
  And still I wend my altered way alone,
And still I say, "To-morrow we shall meet."

I watch the shadows in the crowded street—
  Each passing face I follow one by one—
In every sound I think I hear her feet.

And months go by—bleak March and May-day heat—
  Harvest is over—winter well-nigh done—
And still I say, "To-morrow we shall meet."

Among the city squares, when flowers are sweet,
  With every breath a sigh of hers seems blown—
In every sound I think I hear her feet.

Belfry and clock the unending hours repeat,
  From twelve to twelve—and still she comes in none—
And still I say, "To-morrow we shall meet."

Oh, long-delayed to-morrow!—hearts that beat
  Measure the length of every minute gone—
In every sound I think I hear her feet.

Ever the suns rise, tardily or fleet,
And light the letters on a churchyard stone,—
And still I say, "To-morrow we shall meet."

And still from out her unknown, far retreat
She haunts me with her tender undertone—
In every sound I think I hear her feet—
And still I say, "To-morrow—we shall meet."

ROSA MULHOLLAND.

POVERTY.

I HAD a dream of Poverty by night,
And saw the holy palmer wending by
With pensive mien and radiant upturned eye,
Drinking the tender moon's approving light.

I saw her take the hills and climb the height,
While broad below the city murmured nigh,
Spangling the dust with lamps of revelry
That made the mellow planets pale to sight.

Yet kept my love her face toward the stars
Till broke the dawn against the mountain ridge
And angels met her on the misty way;

Then heaven looked forth on her through golden bars,
Then gleamed her feet along a rosy bridge,
Then passed she noiseless into eternal day.

THE CHILDREN OF LIR.

MOURNFULLY, O mournfully,
The waves of Moyle run to the sea;
White their lips that ever mutter
Of a tale they long to utter.
Softly sleep, my Fionnula!
Never more thy sad wings trailing,
Through the rack of tempests wailing,
Helpless in thy action human,
Weary swan and hapless woman!—
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Mighty Lir, why hast thou taken
To thy widowed breast forsaken
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
One to hate thy children tender,
So that Lucifer may lend her
Power to steal from thine embraces
Curling heads and blooming faces?
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Mournfully, O mournfully,
The waves of Moyle run to the sea.
"Laughing girl, awake so early,
Rise and deck thy beauty rarely."
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)

"Hear my voice that is thy mother's;
Rise, and call thy gentle brothers;
We will journey all together
Through the pleasant summer weather"—
Fionnula, O Ulula!

"To thy grandsire, lone and agèd,
In his distant palace cagèd,"
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
"We will travel through the sunshine,
You shall kiss him in the moonshine,
He will stroke your flowing tresses,
Smiling at your young caresses,"
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Sullenly and mournfully
The waves of Moyle run to the sea.
"Mother, what is this dark water?"
"Let us tarry by it, daughter!"
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
"In its wilds of lake and river,
Tarry thou a swan for ever,
All your happy words are spoken,
All your girlhood's promise broken,"
Fionnula, O Ulula!

"Take thy brothers with thee yonder;
So for ever may ye wander"
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
"Till the sound of sweet bells ringing

Reach your ears, a message bringing;
Long your hearts shall burn to hear it,
Long 'twill be ere I shall fear it!"
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Mournfully, O mournfully,
The waves of Moyle run to the sea,
Eiré's princess, Lir's sweet daughter,
Breasts the dark and lonely water;
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Three wild swans drift out together,
Through the blue and sunny weather,
Drooping wings and heads that languish,
Sickening with their human anguish—
Fionnula, O Ulula!

"Oh, my brothers, keep beside me,
Lest the rolling wave divide me,"
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
"From your tender woe and weakness,
Little brothers, and your meekness,
Let my braver eyes behold you,
And my stronger wings enfold you!"
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Mournfully, O mournfully,
The waves of Moyle run to the sea.
"Here are lilies golden-headed,
Unto white companions wedded;"
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)

Let us rest amid their sweetness—
No, the curse in its completeness
Keeps us ever shifting, shifting,
Three wild swans for ever drifting!"
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Sluggish years, how slow your motion,
Rolling in the rolling ocean,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
To the dirge of Moyle's dark water,
Breaking over Lir's sad daughter,
Rising, falling, ebbing, flowing,
Slowly coming, slowly going—
Fionnula, O Ulula!

O stormily and mournfully
The waves of Moyle foam to the sea;
Winter blasts come forth to meet them,
Bitterly the whirlwinds greet them,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Side by side for ever clinging
'Gainst the tempest, panting, winging,
Seeking by the lake's white edges
Shelter 'mid the whistling sedges—
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Seasons coming, seasons going,
Times have changed beyond our knowing,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Lir hath mourned himself to madness,
Death hath ta'en away his sadness,

Now another hath his glory,
And forgotten is thy story,
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Mournfully, O mournfully,
The waves of Moyle sob in the sea.
Fishers on the green bank yonder
Stay their hands and gaze in wonder
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Where amid the breakers striving,
Beaten by the rain-winds driving,
Greyly gleam the three together,
Phantom creatures, hurrying—whither?
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Like our dreams, confused and broken,
Pass the years till God hath spoken.
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
From our mountains and our meadows
Move at last the morning shadows,
Comes the banisher of sadness,
Comes the messenger of gladness,
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Dreamfully and mournfully
The waves of Moyle rock in the sea.
Hark, the sound of seraphs singing
Like the chime of sweet bells ringing!
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Comes a ship across the ocean,
Winging with an angel's motion,

Bearing one whose words of wonder
Rend the clouds of woe asunder,
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Hark, the sound of children singing!
Hark, the chime of sweet bells ringing!
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
See the fair procession filing
Through the woods and pastures smiling,
White-robed creatures, loved, forgiven,
Newly washed in dews from heaven.
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Peacefully, O peacefully,
The waves of Moyle sleep in the sea.
Banners flying, censers swinging,
Peace on earth brave men are singing,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Holy Patrick, pardon bearing,
Far in front the cross up-rearing,
To the winds their Master nameth,
To the hills their Lord proclaimeth,
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Ring the bells, O ring them clearly,
Ring them late and ring them early,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Through the sun and through the shadow,
O'er the moorland and the meadow,
Lakes, and streams, and rocky places,
And the sandy sea-girt spaces!
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Mournfully, O mournfully,
The waves of Moyle run to the sea.
Let the sound go roaming, roaming,
"Hark, the Lord of love is coming!"
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Fling it far across the water
To the ear of Lir's sad daughter;
Ring it louder, ring it clearer,
"All ye stricken ones, draw nearer!"
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Now upon the wave-girt heather
Saint and flock have knelt together,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
O'er the voice of their appealing,
What is this strange music stealing?
"'Tis the swan!" a fisher crieth,
"Swan that singeth while she dieth"—
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Mournfully, O mournfully,
The waves of Moyle run to the sea.
Lo! the phantom three appearing,
Far away, yet nearing, nearing,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Three grey forms with pinions dragging,
Winging feebly, panting, flagging,
Beaten by the outward breaker,
Battling, ever weaker, weaker—
Fionnula, O Ulula!

To the shore the waters sweep them ;
Well may tender spirits weep them,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula !)
Surely these are human creatures,
Broken forms and wasted features ;
On the beach behold them lying,
Faintly breathing, slowly dying,
Fionnula, O Ulula !

Mournfully, O mournfully,
The waves of Moyle run to the sea ;
Bathe them in the hallowing water—
Lir's brave sons and Lir's sweet daughter.
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula !)
Dig the grave, and kindly lay them
Where no waves nor winds affray them,
Never more their sad wings trailing
Through the rack of tempests wailing,
Fionnula, O Ulula !

Plant the cross of Christ above them,
Bid the little children love them,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula !)
While at eve they cease their playing,
Dimpled cheeks together laying,
Listening to the wind-bells ringing,
"Hark!" they say, "the swans are singing!'
Fionnula, O Ulula !

EVELYN PYNE.

A WITNESS.

WILD and eerie was the night,
And the snow fell thick and white,
And across the moaning sea
Sped the spirits wearily;
And the north wind from the moor
Railed and rattled at the door;
And against the window-pane
Smote the bitter hail and rain.

Wild and eerie was the night,
But the fire within burned bright,
And my mother span apace,
With the red light on her face;
And my father, as he sat,
Slowly stroked the purring cat,
While she lay upon my knee;—
For no fear or care had we.

Wild and eerie was the night,
Yet no cause had we for fright,
And the moaning of the sea
Seemed a cradle-song to me;
And the loose wind-rattled pane,
Smitten sharply by the rain,

But a playmate singing low,
Not the harbinger of woe.

Wild and eerie was the night,
Yet in Mary's blessed sight
Darkest night is clear as day;
And the sweet saints ever pray
To the dear Lord on His throne,
When the nights are dark and lone,—
So our priest says constantly,
And his words seemed true to me.

Wild and eerie was the night,
Yet the faint and chequered light
Of the log-fire, cast athwart
Wheel and worker, subtly wrought
From the old forms that I knew,
Visions strange, and weird, and new,
Till I slept the young child's sleep,
Dreamless, visionless, and deep.

. . . . .

Sudden woke I, with a start,
And a cold fear at my heart.
Through the clamour at the pane
Came a sound that was not rain,
Wind, or hail, or storm, or sea,
But a deadlier enemy!
With a crash, the fast-barred door
At my feet fell, on the floor!

Three men, through the open space
Rushed into our dwelling-place;
Seized my father by the hair,
While my mother, in despair,
Strove to shield him with her breast.
God! how can I tell the rest?
Swift they dragged him from our sight,
Out into the fearful night!

Never, while I live, shall I
Lose the utter misery
Of my mother's maddened eyes!
Always to my ears will rise
Her despairing shriek, as they
Tore him from her arms away—
Bleeding, wounded, scarce alive,
How should he with three men strive?

Out into that awful night
Rushed they, from her tortured sight.
For an instant, with shrill groan,
Sank she fainting, cold as stone;
But full soon her face flushed red:
"Hear that sound, my child!" she said;
"'Tis your father's dying cry,
As they murder him hard-by!

"When he's dead (heed carefully
What I say; ah, woe is me!
Father's blood and mother's tears
Yield you strength beyond your years!)

Then will come my turn to die.
(Darling listen heedfully)
In yon cupboard must you hide;
By the small crack in its side

"Set your face, where you can see
All the bitter tragedy.
I will struggle as I may.
See, the fire is bright as day;"—
Here she flung logs fresh and dry,
And the fire blazed clear and high—
"In this light your eyes can scan
Face and form of every man."

Then she set me in my place,
With a smile on her wan face;
And she kissed me, held me near
Her poor heart, till I could hear
Its swift beats; and then she said,
"Help will come when I am dead;
And, my child, your voice must be
Raised to tell the truth for me.

"At each face, look well, my own;
Never think you are alone;
See, I lay upon your knee
Pussy for sweet company.
Very soon the sun will rise,"
(Oh, the anguish of her eyes!)
"Then, my darling, you will tell
What you saw. Watch well! watch well!"

As she kissed me, last of all,
Said she, "Let no whisper fall
From your lips, but silently
Heed whate'er you hear or see."
Hasty footsteps filled the place;
Muttered curses fell apace;
Back the murderers had sped.
God! and was my father dead?

Lurid flashed the new-fed fire,
Springing upward, brighter, higher—
On her white face as she strove,
Strong in vengeance and in love,
'Gainst those red knives, dripping wet
With my father's life-blood yet.
Oh, my God! I know not well
How time sped! At last she fell!

Stricken through and through again,
With no feeling left but pain,
She had striven, that each man
Well her child might note and scan:
Think you I forget these three?
Not till life forgetteth me!
Silent watched I till they fled,
Then I crept out to the dead,

And ye found me. Here I stand,
God's own book within my hand;
In His awful sight I swear
That the murderers stand there!

KATHARINE TYNAN.

WEST WIND.

COME in, wet wind of the West,
Through the dusty streets of the town,
With the scent of the new-mown hay,
And a song of a bird by the nest,
A breath of roses new blown,
The laughter of children at play!

The meadows are waving high
With plumy grasses of grey,
And golden-eyed daisies are born;
There's a lark in the silvery sky,
And a thrush on the wild-rose spray,
And poppies in the green corn.

In the woods there's a singing burn,
And swallows stooping for flies
O'er pebbles, topaz, and beryl.
All day will the wood-doves mourn,
And gaze in each other's eyes;
And the fronds of the fern uncurl.

Oh, blow, wet wind of the West,
Through every window and door
And kiss the children asleep,
And soothe the dying to rest,
In the dreary homes of the poor,
Where fever his watch doth keep!

The green things, heavy with pain,
Lift their languishing brows
From the highway's dust and its heat:
For thy beautiful daughter, the Rain,
Clad in the pearl and the rose,
Walks by thee with silvery feet.

Oh, freshest of winds that blow,
Come in from thy valleys cool
From the bowers of the evening star,
The gardens of after-glow,
With crimson roses at full,
And lilies that perfect are.

POPPIES.

THROUGH the land at Midsummer,
Singing, Love came.
Gracious was the new-comer,
Like a God in face and limb,
And the trailing wings of him
Tipped with flame.
Red gold hair, and flushed face
Warm as the south;
And he stood a little space,
By the sunrise seas of wheat,
Took wild rose and meadow-sweet,
And laid them on his mouth.

In his luminous deep eyes
A slow smile grew,
When a small bird, brown and wise,
Sudden sang a yard away,
A little mad fair roundelay
To skies of blue;
And ah! his eyes were very sad,
With tears o'erfilled,
And died the grave sweet smile he had,
When in the wide wheat's wrinkled gold
He saw a small bird, soft and cold,
Its singing stilled.

Many a gift he bore that hour
For many a one,
Rose, and rue, and passion-flower;
As he went, he gatherèd
The silken poppies, tall and red,
Flaunting in the sun.
Took them to him tenderly,
The flowers of sleep,
Kissed their lips with many a sigh,
"Now I have no better thing
Than a Lethe cup to bring
To some that weep."

So he came, in morning hours,
To a garden wild,
Where among hushed dreaming flowers,
A pale, golden-headed girl,
Like a daisy or a pearl,
Stood and smiled.
The reddest rose in all the land,—
He held to her;
Fell the poppies from his hand
Brushed the gold bloom of her hair
Smote her innocent eyes, and fair
Till they closed were.

When the slumber took her eyes,
Skies were blue and gold,
The world was fair as Paradise,

And when she woke, at, well-a-day !
The wintry world was bare and grey,
And she was cold,
Very tired and most forlorn :
"Now, heart, wilt break?
Our life's day is gone since morn :
All the years like shifting sands,
Slipped from out those empty hands,
For a dream's sake!"

JANE LECK.

ROBIN AND MEG.

THE kye had been milkit, the milk had been set,
The cogs had been scaudit,[1] the byre a' made straight,
When Meg wi' clean apron an' short gown sae trig,
Took her ways tae the trystin' tree, near the auld brig.

O licht fa's the foot when the heart kens nae care,
An' bricht is the e'e that brims owre wi' love-lair;
The simple bit lilt bears owre a' sangs the gree,[2]
That a lass sings when bound for the auld trystin' tree.

"I lo'e nae a laddie but ane," Meg sings oot,
Wi' voice saft an' tunefu', an' clear as a flute;
The thocht of that laddie lichts up a' her face,
An' the hope o' her tryst gars[3] her quicken her pace.

. . . . . .

Wi' lang swinging step, an' a heart licht as Meg's,
Wha's this that comes whistlin' thro' rashes an' seggs?[4]
It's Robin that wons in the Smiddy, maybe
Twa guid mile doun the burn frae the auld trystin' tree.

[1] The pails had been scalded. [2] Pre-eminence. [3] Makes
[4] Rushes and sedges.

He thocht o' the tryst a' the lang simmer day,
O' hoo Meg will greet him, an' what he will say;
He hauf thinks that Meg michtna tak' it amiss,
If he should, sae to speak, break the ice wi' a kiss!

An' jist as he's smilin' the brig comes in sicht,
An' the auld tree beside it that shines in the licht,
The licht that gleams gowden on Meg's bonnie hair,
For the first blink has told him that she's sittin' there.

But noo wi' ilk step he gets mair an' mair blate,[1]
Till reachin' the tree he sits doun on the sate,
At airm's length frae Meg, an' no lookin' her way,
By an' by says, "Hoo's a' wi' ye, up by, the day?"[2]

"O fine," answers Meg, an' there's naething mair said,
Rab whistles, Meg pecks at the fringe o' her plaid;
Ilk ane at the ither keeks hidlins[3] fu' sweet,
Till at last, hoo I kenna, twa pair o' een meet.

Noo Robin draps whistlin', an' says, "Meg, my lass,
I ne'er saw sic craps,[4] baith o' corn an' o' grass,
Is your hay a' in?" an' wi' ilk wee bit phrase
He wins nearer the lass, till he touches her taes.

He talks o' the neeps,[5] o' the butter an' cheese,
An' grips a plump haun' that responds tae his squeeze,
His airm fin's its way roun' Meg's denty bit waist,
An' she disna look angry, though unco shamefaced.

[1] Shy. [2] How's all with you, up the way, to-day?
[3] Peeps with sidelong glances. [4] Crops. [5] Turnips.

Nae need for the lips tae speak what can be seen,
By the clasp o' the haun' an' the glance o' the een,
Nae need tae palaver o' luve atween twa,
That hae lippened till ither[1] for ance an' for a'.

Their coortin' speeds brawly, but on the nicht[2] creeps,
The mune thro' the trees at their leave-takin' peeps,
Meg's hair an' Rab's whiskers seem unco confused,
An' the wished-for kiss hasna, I trow, been refused.

[1] Plighted their troth. [2] Night.

ELIZABETH CRAIGMYLE.

UNDER DEEP APPLE BOUGHS.

THE garden-shadows are flecked with the glory of light.
In the light, the tulips flame; in the dark, fern fronds uncurl;
And each red apple-bloom bursts its beauty into white,
As if a ruby should break, and shatter into a pearl.

They flutter slowly downward, and fall, soft as a snow-shower,
Here at our feet their loveliness finds an end.
Was it worth to make such beauty only for one hour?
Do you grieve for the fate of the blossoms, O my friend?

When Autumn stands in the land, with full and bounteous bosom,
Honey-sweet fruit shall hang, ripening and red on the wall.
Shall girlhood's gift of versing be but a barren blossom?
Wait, heart. Thy fruit shall set, when the flowers of fancy fall.

CHAINED TIGERS.

I.

THERE is a dreadful legend of the past,
  Tells how, for some love-crime, a wretched man
  Was dungeoned with a tiger Lybian,
Each in a corner of the cell bound fast,
Left face to face together, till at last
  Hunger should give the tiger strength to break
  The brazen links that bound him, and to make
The prisoner's quivering limbs his fell repast.

Did the man's ear at last strain for the rend
  Of breaking links that set the chained brute free?
  Did he at every instant seem to see
The tawny limbs curve for the gathered bound,
Feel foam-flecked jaws about his throat close round,
  Feel the white fangs gnash through and make an
    end?

CHAINED TIGERS.

II.

My cell is narrower. Shut within a room
  Whose threshold I shall never cross again,
  I hear no echoes from the world of men,
Buried, as if already in the tomb.
To my sick brain familiar things assume
  Unholy shapes that haunt me all the day,
  Then, when night falls, on bat-wings flit away,
And leave more ghastly things to fill the gloom.

And ever, within spring-reach of my bed,
  Crouch the twin-tigers chained, Disease and Death,
  All day I hear the horror of their breath,
Their hot pants with my laboured breathings blend,
  All night on me their hungry eyes burn red,—
  Ah God! when will they spring, and make an end?

SOLWAY SANDS.

TWA race doon by the Gatehope-Slack,
When nicht is wearin' near to the noon,
He on the grey and she on the black,
Her faither and brithers are hard on the track,
And Solway sands are white in the moon.

Strong is their love, but their loves may be twined
Or ever the lady grant love's boon,
Elliots and Armstrongs hold chase behind,
Their shouts and curses ring down the wind,
And Solway sands stretch white in the moon.

Annan rins fu' frae brae to bank,
But Katharine's lover is nae coward loon,
Into the good grey's foam-flecked flank
In the rowels o' the grey steel sank,
And Solway sands wait white in the moon.

The water's up to his bandelier,
It's up to the waist o' her satin goon;
"We'll win to the shore and never fear,
There's never a Elliot will follow here,"
And Solway sands glint white in the moon.

The steeds and the riders are safely o'er,
  Through the swirl o' waters that waste and droon ;
" We try the swimming this night no more,
The boat is waiting on Solway shore,
  And Solway sands shine white in the moon."

Through the grey tide-water their horses splash
  Through the salt pools left on the sea-sand broon;
Then on to the waiting boat they dash,
Their midnight riding is wild and rash,
  And Solway sands gleam white in the moon.

" To-night the boat's rough deck I trow,
  Next night the bridal in Carlisle toon."
But nights shall come and nights shall go,
O'er their bride-bed deep in the quicksand's flow,
  And Solway sands stand white in the moon.

The boat rocks light on the Solway wave,
  The turn of the tide is coming soon,
But slowly they sink in their ghastly grave,
Wrapped round in the dark with none to save,
  And Solway sands laugh white in the moon.

The cloud wrack breaks, and the stars shine fair,
  The sea's voice sounds like a mystic rune,
The skipper looks out, but none are there,
The glimmering coast-line is wide and bare,
  And Solway Sands are white in the moon.

E. NESBIT.

PESSIMISM.

NOT Spring—too lavish of her bud and leaf—
But Autumn, with sad eyes and brow austere,
When fields are bare, and woods are brown and sere,
And leaden skies weep their exhaustless grief:
Spring is so much too bright, since Spring is brief.
And in our hearts is autumn all the year,
Least sad when the wild pastures are most drear,
And fields grieve most robbed of the last gold sheaf.

For when the plough goes down the brown wet field,
A delicate doubtful throb of hope is ours—
What if this coming Spring at last should yield
Joy, with her too profuse unasked-for flowers?
Not all our Springs of commonplace and pain
Have taught us now that autumn hope is vain.

THE DEAD MOTHER.

SINCE you were tired and went away
We've brought you flowers every day,
Now through your grass live daisies peer
O mother, mother dear!

You used to listen every day
To everything we had to say;
But now we think you do not hear,
O mother, mother dear!

They say you are not very far,
But since we cry we know you are;
We should not cry if you were near
O mother, mother dear!

Mother, you know we sometimes cry
In the dark night, we don't know why;
You would not let us cry for fear,
O mother, mother dear!

We think perhaps you did not know
Your little children loved you so,
Or you would not have left them here,
O mother, mother dear!

If we are good we think that then
Perhaps you will come back again;
Come in a week—a month—a year,
O mother, mother dear!

O mother, mother, come to-day!
Why did you ever go away?
We are so tired of being here
Without you, mother dear!

MAY KENDALL.

EDUCATION'S MARTYR.

He loved peculiar plants and rare,
For any plant he did not care
That he had seen before;
Primroses by the river's brim
Dicotyledons were to him,
And they were nothing more.

The mighty cliffs we bade him scan,
He banned them for Laurentian,
With sad dejected mien.
"Than all this bleak azoic rock,"
He said, "I'd sooner have a block—
Ah me!—of Pleistocene!"

His eyes were bent upon the sand;
He owned the *scenery* was grand,
In a reproachful voice;
But if a centipede he found,
He'd fall before it on the ground,
And worship and rejoice.

We spoke of Poets dead and gone,
Of that Mæonian who shone
O'er Hellas like a star:
We talked about the King of Men,—
"Observe," he said, "the force of κεν,
And note the use of γαρ!"

Yes, all that has been or may be,
States, beauties, battles, land, and sea,
The matin songs of larks,
With glacier, earthquake, avalanche,
To him were each a separate "branch,"
And stuff for scoring marks!

Ah! happier he who does not know
The power that makes the Planets go,
The slaves of Kepler's Laws;
Who finds not glands in joy or grief,
Nor, in the blossom and the leaf,
Seeks for the secret cause!

WOMAN'S FUTURE.

FROM THE STANDPOINT OF "WOMAN'S RIGHTS."

COMPLACENT they tell us, hard hearts and derisive,
In vain is our ardour: in vain are our sighs:
Our intellects, bound by a limit decisive,
To the level of Homer's may never arise.
We heed not the falsehood, the base innuendo,
The laws of the universe, these are our friends.
Our talents shall rise in a mighty crescendo,
We trust evolution to make us amends!

But ah, when I ask you for food that is mental,
My sisters, you offer me ices and tea!
You cherish the fleeting, the mere accidental,
At the cost of the True, the Intrinsic, the Free.
Your feelings, compressed in Society's mangle,
Are vapid and frivolous, pallid and mean.
To slander you love; but you don't care to wrangle:
You bow to Decorum, and cherish Routine.

Alas! is it woolwork you take for your mission,
Or Art that your fingers so gaily attack?
Can patchwork atone for the mind's inanition?
Can the soul, oh my sisters, be fed on a *plaque?*

Is this your vocation? My goal is another,
And empty and vain is the end you pursue.
In antimacassars the world you may smother;
But intellect marches o'er them and o'er you.

On Fashion's vagaries your energies strewing,
Devoting your days to a rug or a screen,
Oh, rouse to a lifework—do something worth doing!
Invent a new planet, a flying machine.
Mere charms superficial, mère feminine graces,
That fade or that flourish, no more you may prize;
But the knowledge of Newton will beam from your faces,
The soul of a Spencer will shine in your eyes.

ENVOY.

Though jealous exclusion may tremble to own us,
Oh, wait for the time when our brains shall expand!
When once we're enthroned, you shall never dethrone us—
The poets, the sages, the seers of the land!

GRAHAM R. TOMSON.

OPEN, SESAME.

So low swings the broad gold moon I could clasp her—
nearly;
Up to the brow of the down, and an arm's length merely—
Only a span—yet she mounts, while I pause and wonder,
Chill and remote as the thin white clouds beyond her.

So simple the charmèd word I could almost say it;
The glimmering dusk, the dew-fall, half betray it;
Half—yet the silence holds her spell unspoken,
Mute, while the moment fades estranged and broken.

Almost I tread the twilight fields of faery,
Almost I pluck their blossoms frail and airy,
E'en though the spoil doth turn, home-coming hither,
Armfuls of yellowing leaves and weeds that wither.

Held to the earth's full heart, an instant wholly,
Know we nor fear nor fret, but gladness solely;
Joy in our part in all—in life's possession,
Joy in the Joy of Life beyond expression.

Joy in the task beloved though unavailing,
Joy in the splendid steeps too high for scaling;
Joy in the fleeting glimpse, the vain endeavour,
Though Almost meadows flower by the gates of Never.

ARSINOË'S CATS.

Imitation of the manner of the later Greek poets, circ. A.D. 500. *Cats were unknown in historic Greece till about the Christian era.*

ARSINOË the fair, the amber-tressed,
Is mine no more;
Cold as the unsunned snows are is her breast,
And closed her door.
No more her ivory feet and tresses braided
Make glad mine eyes;
Snapt are my viol-strings, my flowers are faded—
My love-lamp dies.

Yet, once, for dewy myrtle-buds and roses,
All summer long,
We searched the twilight-haunted garden closes
With jest and song.
Aye, all is over now—my heart hath changèd
Its heaven for hell;
And that ill chance that all our love estrangèd
In this wise fell:
A little lion, small and dainty sweet
(For such there be!)
With sea-grey eyes and softly-stepping feet,
She prayed of me.

For this, through lands Egyptian far away
She bade me pass;
But in an evil hour, I said her nay—
And now, alas!
Far-travelled Nicias hath wooed, and won
Arsinoë
With gifts of furry creatures white and dun
From over-sea.

THE SMILE OF ALL-WISDOM.

SEEKING the Smile of All-Wisdom, one wandered afar,
(He that first fashioned the Sphinx, in the dusk of the past):
Looked on the faces of sages, of heroes of war;
Looked on the lips of the lords of the uttermost star,
Magi, and kings of the earth—nor had found it at last,

Save for the word of a slave, hoary-headed and weak,
Trembling, that clung to the hem of his garment, and said,
"Master, the least of your servants has found what you seek:
(Pardon, O Master, if all without wisdom I speak!)
Sculpture the smile of your Sphinx from the lips of the Dead!"

Rising, he followed the slave to a hovel anear;
Lifted the mat from the doorway, and looked on the bed.
"Nay, thou hast spoken aright, thou hast nothing to fear:
That which I sought thou hast found, Friend; for lo, it is here!—
Surely the Smile of the Sphinx is the Smile of the Dead!"

Aye, on the stone lips of old, on the clay of to-day,
Tranquil, inscrutable, sweet with a quiet disdain,
Lingers the Smile of All-Wisdom, still seeming to say,
"Fret not, O Friend, at the turmoil—it passeth away;
Waste not the Now in the search of a Then that is vain:

"Hushed in the infinite dusk at the end shall ye be,
Feverish, questioning spirits that travail and yearn,
Quenched in the fulness of knowledge and peaceful as we:
Lo, we have lifted the Veil—there was nothing to see!
Lo, we have looked on the Scroll—there was nothing to learn!"

L. M. LITTLE.

REMEMBRANCE.

SAY, what is this you ask of me, my Sweet,
Seeing no longer face to face we meet,
That I should tell you when, as lovers do,
I think of you?

When the glad sun first chases night away,
When shadows softly steal across the way,
And when the stars are burning in the blue,
I think of you!

When the leaves drift, and when the snowflakes fall,
When cowslips in the meadow grass grow tall,
When red rose-petals all the pathway strew,
I think of you!

When down Life's stream full merrily we go,
Glad voices chiming with the strokes we row;
And in the dreary days when songs are few,
I think of you!

In secret sorrow and in Joy's glad prime,
O Best Beloved Heart, there is *no* time
But with a love most passionate and true
I think of you!

LIFE.

O LIFE! that mystery that no man knows,
And all men ask; the Arab from his sands,
The Cæsar's self, lifting imperial hands,
And the lone dweller where the lotus blows;

O'er trackless tropics, and o'er silent snows,
She dumbly broods, that Sphinx of all the lands;
And if she answers, no man understands,
And no cry breaks the blank of her repose.

But a new form rose once upon my pain,
With grave, sad lips, but in the eyes a smile
Of deepest meaning dawning sweet and slow,

Lighting to service, and no more in vain
I ask of Life, "What art thou?"—as erewhile
For since Love holds my hand I seem to know!

MARY C. GILLINGTON.

A DEAD MARCH.

Be hushed, all voices and untimely laughter;
Let no least word be lightly said
In the awful presence of the Dead,
That slowly, slowly this way comes—
Arms piled on coffin, comrades marching after,
Colours reversed, and muffled drums.

Be bared, all heads; feet, the procession follow
Throughout the stilled and sorrowing town;
Weep, woeful eyes, and be cast down;
Tread softly, till the bearers stop
Under the cypress in the shadowy hollow,
While last light fades o'er mountain top.

Lay down your burden here, whose life hath journeyed
Afar, and where ye may not wot;
Some little while around this spot
Be dirges sung, and prayers low said,
Dead leaves disturbed, and clammy earth upturnëd;
Then in his grave dead Love is laid.

Fling them upon him—withered aspirations,
And battered hopes, and broken vows;
He was the last of all his house,
Hath left behind no kith nor kin;
His blood-stained arms and faded decorations,
His dinted helmet,—throw them in.

And all the time the twilight skies are turning
To sullen ash and leaden grey;
Cast the sods o'er him, come away;
In vain upon his name you call,—
Though you all night should call with bitter yearning,
He would not heed nor hear at all.

Pass homeward now, in musing melancholy,
To find the house enfilled with gloom,
And no lights lit in any room,
And stinging herald drops of rain;
Choke up your empty heart with anguish wholly,
For Love will never rise again.

THE HOME COMING.

FROM the trees the wind is stripping
Yellow leaflets dank and dripping,
And the daffodil-sunset tipping
All the hills with misty light ;
Where the fitful gleam has rested,
Waves, a moment amber-crested,
Now with deeper gloom invested,
Groan, impatient for the night.

Dusk enfolded, shadow-holden,
Mossy barn and wheat-rick golden,
Granary grey and farmstead olden,
Swathed in restful drowsing lie.
Gulls cry down the shore,—and over
Flooded fields the wailing plover
Strays, and lonely curlews hover
Black against the fading sky.

But while darkness nearer closes,
And the hamlet hushed reposes,—
Summer wakens all its roses
Forth to blossom in my heart,

When with rapturous joy completest
In another moment fleetest
I shall greet you, O my sweetest,
Held so long from me apart.

Every wave expectant glistens,
Every leaf on tiptoe listens,
Strange sounds wander in the distance
O'er the stubble-fields new ploughed;
All the starry lamps are burning,
Lit to welcome your returning,
And the moon, my bliss discerning,
Springs from out a sable cloud.

Blow, keen wind, from off the hilly
Woodlands damp and pastures chilly,
But around my love, my lily,
Breathe more languid and more low;
Sweet world-old love-legends sing her,
Delicate corn-odours bring her,
Faint warm fragrances that linger
Where the latest violets grow.

Milk-white moon, through cloud-wrack hoary,
Pour in pearly streams thy glory,
Stoop thy horn to hear our story,
Droop thy curve to kiss my dear.
Wreathe her round with glimmerings tender,
Crown her brows with mystic splendour,
With thine influence pure befriend her,
Steadfast through the waning year.

Comes she not? the darkness thickens,—
All my soul with longing sickens,
All my heart its beating quickens,
To a joy-march wild and fast.
O to mark her fleet feet nearing,
O to find, at her appearing,
Light and night, and sight and hearing,
Swallowed up in joy at last!

ALICE E. GILLINGTON.

A WEST-COUNTRY LOVE-SONG!

O, THE sweet dream of the springtide!
O, the quiet laugh of the morn!
When the brook rippled down to the foot of the town,
And everywhere flowers were born,
And pear trees stood white in the orchard,
And daisies blushed red in the clover,
And through the soft rain the thrush sang in the lane,
Where all the flower-faces drooped over.

O, the faint fragrance of roses,
Crumpled up, pink and white, in your hand,
When all the long day comes the breath of the hay,
And the brook bubbles down to the sand—
To the sand and the glittering tide,
And the marsh and the fields of red clover,
Where the golden-tipped Iris groweth, I wis,
And the curlew's long whistle wails over.

Now with that look in your face,
With the sunlight aslant on your cheek,
Will you understand, while I hold your hand,
And, oh, dearest maid, let me speak?
For the west wind, with stories of old,
Blows wild across bird's-foot and clover,
As the sea turns to grey at the end of the day,
And all the flower-faces droop over.

NOCTURNES.

I.

THE golden-lipped buttercup of the Day,
Filled with nectar-dew to the brim,
Closes its petals and sleeps; all grey,
Ripples the sea at the dark world's rim;
And the night-hawks whir,
And the elm trees stir
Against the apricot-glow grown dim.

Now wist I, my soul has flown away free
As bird let loose from the fowler's snare;
I only long for the star-lit sea—
O for the waves low plashing there!
When the night-hawks whir,
And the dark trees stir,
And blue dusk follows the hot day's glare.

The grey, gaunt rock where the sea-shell clings,
And the rain that ripples the tidal pool,
And the wood where the yellow-hammer sings—
Thoughts like these are quiet and cool;
But to think of thee
Would bring misery,
Not calm refreshment like these sweet things.

Yet why does my spirit, once so free,
Beat like a wind-blown moth at the pane?
Sigh like the far-off foam on the sea?
Tremble like rose leaves loose in the lane?
Has the love once spurned
Grown turbulent?—turned
Home to the sorrowful heart again?

At night dreams come from the beautiful sea,
The wind blows wild up the wailful shore;
And never again will I dream of thee—
I shall forget thee for evermore—
While deep waves sigh
The long hours by,
And the new moon glints through the trysting-tree.

II.

I want to breathe the salt wind from the sea,
And hear the deep waves tossing on the bar;
The moon is up to-night, and Love's white star
Sets in the western dome all dusky grey;
I stretch my hands to call you back to me,
So soon forgetful! and still more I pray
That I may feel the soft wind from the sea,
And hear the dark waves tossing on the bar.

I want once more to meet you in the street,
Sea-hushed and calm, and tranquil as a dream,
After the long day's duty and the heat;
I want to see the gold-lit tidal stream,

And hear the fluttering laughter of the wind
Across those well-loved ways long left behind.
I want once more to see you in that street
Sea-hushed and calm, and tranquil as a dream.

I want to breathe the fresh wind from the sea,
And hear the deep waves tossing on the bar;
I hold your hand beneath the even-star,
And ask you, heart's beloved, to be my wife.
Old songs return—lost joys come back to me;
Look in my eyes, sweetheart and love! sweet life!
While the west wind blows cool across the sea,
And those dark waves are tossing on the bar!

NOTES.

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HARRIET MARTINEAU. — 1802-1876. — This well-known political economist and novelist wrote a poem entitled "August," which appeared in the *Monthly Repository*, 1834. It is reprinted in this volume under the title of "Onward" 1

SARA COLERIDGE, Mrs.—1803-1852.—"Phantasmion," a fairy tale, 1837, containing various songs. In the second edition of S. T. Coleridge's "Biographia Literaria," prepared for publication 'by the late Henry Nelson Coleridge, and by his widow,' occur the "Lines on the common saying that Love is Blind," by Sara Coleridge. "These lines are an attempt to bring out a sentiment which my father once expressed to me on the common saying that Love is blind" 3

CAROLINE NORTON, the Hon. Mrs.—1809-1877.—Granddaughter of the dramatist, Richard Brinsley Sheridan. She married in the last year of her life Sir William Stirling Maxwell, of Kier. She wrote several novels; also "The Sorrows of Rosalie," 1829; "The Grudging One," 1830; "The Dream," 1841; "The Child of the Islands," 1846; "Aunt Carry's Ballads for Children," 1848; "Lady of La Garaye," 1863 8

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LADY DUFFERIN.—1807-1867.—Afterwards the Countess of Gifford. Sister to the Hon. Mrs. Caroline Norton. "Lispings from Low Latitudes" 12

JANE WELSH CARLYLE, Mrs.—The wife of Thomas Carlyle. Her poem, quoted in this book, was written at Craigenputtock in 1832, and enclosed in a letter to Francis Jeffreys. It is published in "Thomas Carlyle: a History of the first forty years of his Life, 1795-1835"—by J. A. Froude, M.A. 15

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING, Mrs.—1809-1861.—Wife of Robert Browning, the poet, and mother of Robert Barrett Browning, the artist. Her works are "Essay on Mind, and other Poems," 1826; "Prometheus Bound, and other Poems," 1833; "The Seraphim, and other Poems," 1838; "The Drama of Exile," 1844; "Poems," 2 vols., 1844; "Casa Guidi Windows," 1851; "Aurora Leigh," 1856; "Poems before Congress," 1860; "Last Poems," 1862 17

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FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE.—Born 1811.—Actress. Daughter of Charles Kemble, the actor, and niece of Mrs. Siddons. In addition to her prose writings she published a drama, "The Star of Seville," 1837, and a volume of poems in 1844 56

JANET HAMILTON, Mrs.—1795-1873.—"Poems and Essays of a miscellaneous character on subjects of general interest," 1863; "Poems of purpose and sketches in prose of Scottish Peasant Life and Character, etc.," 1865; "Poems and Ballads," 1868. Mrs. Hamilton was

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the wife of a shoemaker in Lanarkshire, and the mother of ten children. She said of herself, "Shakespeare was my teacher; my ear is also my guide so far; and besides this, God has given me a good tack of natural grammar. You might as well ask the laverock (lark) how it can sing, as ask me how I can write according to the rules of grammar." Mr. John Bright said of her, "She is the most remarkable old woman I ever heard of. . Hers is an amazing story. It has surprised me beyond anything I have read for a long time" 59

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EMILY BRONTË.—1818-1848.—Sister to Charlotte Brontë, the novelist. In 1846 a volume of poems written by her and her two sisters was published under the title, "Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell." Her pseudonym was Ellis. She also was the author of the well-known novel, "Wuthering Heights" . 67

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MENELLA BUTE SMEDLEY.—"Lays and Ballads from English History," 1858; "Poems," 1868; "Two Dramatic Poems," 1874 82

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CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.—Sister of the poet and artist, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Her poetical works are—"Verses, Dedicated to her Mother, privately printed," 1847; "The Goblin Market, and other Poems," 1862; "The Prince's Progress," 1866; "Sing-Song, a nursery rhyme book," 1872; "A Pageant, and other Poems," 1881; "Poems," 1882 102

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ISA CRAIG (Mrs. John Knox) gained the first prize for a Competition Ode which was recited at the Burns Centenary Festival in 1865. She has published "Poems," 1857; "Duchess Agnes, and other Poems," 1864; "Songs of Consolation," 1874 . . . 120

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